

THE ECONOMIC HISTORY REVIEW

SECOND SERIES, VOL. III, No. 3

1951

STATISTICAL TRENDS AND HISTORICAL CHANGES

BY SIMON KUZNETS

THE aim of these notes is to examine the uses of statistical data in the study of long-term changes in the economies of nations. They deal with the general characteristics of data serving as raw material for the study of historical change; the specific characteristics of statistical data; the ways in which these diverse raw materials are organized in systematic accounts; the easy pitfalls in generalizing from statistics; and, in conclusion, the possibilities of statistical analysis of economic growth during the recent stretch of human history.

I

Reflexion upon the empirical data available for the study of historical changes of a large social aggregate (nation, regional group, industry, etc.) suggests the following conclusions:

(1) An individual's power to observe historical changes in social aggregates *directly* is extremely limited. He can be an eyewitness of some conspicuous episodes (revolutionary uprisings, wars, famines, dynastic successions, etc.) but his direct observation can encompass only a small fraction of the event. He can examine some apparent results of past social life (monuments, buildings, and other artifacts), but even here he is limited by time, space and resources. He can study records of discussion and decision in official reports, laws, statutes, etc., but these are highly selective since they have survived and are known only because certain aspects of social life were chosen for recording.

(2) In view of the brevity of life and the limited physical powers of an individual, as contrasted with the life span and material dimensions of social aggregates, the scope of direct observation is too narrow to encompass more than a minute fraction of the life and magnitude of a social aggregate; and it will represent a biased sample. The observer will seek to witness and record events that he considers significant or strategic. And when he deals not with events, but with 'monuments'—whether buildings or legal codices

—he treats *results* which fail to reflect many types of social change, or which reflect them so obliquely that they are beyond recapture.

(3) The selective bias in direct observation by one man also characterizes the data recorded by n observers, unless they happen to be organized in a predetermined fashion so as to divide among themselves the complete span of a stretch of human history. True, if a student can draw not only upon his own observations but also upon the records of $n - 1$ others, his field of view is enormously magnified, and his coverage becomes more commensurate with the life span and magnitude of social aggregates. He can also try to correct for the *known* biases of other observers. Yet he can gather from others only what *they* have observed and learned—subject to an additional bias introduced by their selection for purposes of the overt record. The multiplication of observers does not, therefore, change the essential characteristic of the raw materials of historical study—the bias in their selection.

(4) The supply of statistical data is also highly selective and biased—especially such as are available at regular intervals and at certain minimum levels of accuracy, and are of the type most useful for the study of long-term economic change. Such data (as distinct from fanciful guesses) are not within the power of a single individual to produce. Society, through its commanding organs, produces statistical data and often, although not always, records them for wider and later use. Because of their high cost, statistics are not collected unless they are recognized as useful for the operation of society at large, or are required for administration, being, in fact, by-products of the latter. The bias in such a selection is obvious.

(5) The raw materials for the study of historical change are inevitably selective; exhaustive coverage of any phenomenon is, by definition, impossible. And what is bias from one standpoint may be a proper basis for selection from another. It is not a selective bias that creates difficulties; it is rather the lack of a *well-defined* basis for selection, or an inadequate criterion of selection thus proved in the light of the greater knowledge and wisdom of later observers. The raw materials now available to a student of the economic growth of nations are inadequate because recorded episodes have been chosen by criteria that are either hard to define, or, when defined, represent a viewpoint not fully acceptable; and the statistical data provided by society, even aside from possible errors, are, in many cases, disappointingly scanty. Yet one must work with the available raw materials since the past is largely irretrievable.

II

By statistical data we mean numerical observations of aggregates. Observation is stressed to distinguish statistics from imaginary or theoretical values that can be assigned to aggregates or to some of their aspects. The emphasis on aggregates—as distinct from a single phenomenon or a highly organized system within which we can distinguish only interdependent parts rather than individual units—makes statistical data particularly appropriate for

the study of human society. In fact, it is in this field that statistical discipline and its very name originated. And the numerical character of the observations is what distinguishes statistical data from other types of historical data such as records of episodes, legal statutes, public pronouncements, proceedings of debates, diaries, etc.

At the risk of stating the obvious, we list the elementary implications of the numerical character of statistics:

(1) Such data can be made practically *complete* within easily identifiable limits of time and space. To illustrate: total production of cotton cloth by the textile industry of Great Britain in 1925, or over a period extending from 1860 to 1938, can be measured quite readily. Contrast this with the difficulty of giving a complete account of 'entrepreneurial activity' or 'technical changes' in the same industry during the same period. For example, Schumpeter's definition of the entrepreneur as the innovator would call for the identification and complete enumeration of entrepreneurs and their innovations, a task difficult to accomplish short of an impossibly exhaustive account of all firms and of all their activities. In studying 'technical changes' in the industry we are confronted with a variety of major inventions, minor improvements, modifications, etc., impinging upon the manufacturing processes at various stages and in various plants: and only selective, rather than complete, treatment seems feasible.

It is important to note how decisions involved in choosing a field for measurement permit complete treatment with relative ease. Those made in defining the cotton-textile industry in Great Britain and the historical period covered are the same in our statistical series and in the illustrations citing non-measurable aspects. The distinctive decisions that made statistics of cotton-cloth production possible, involved selecting: (a) an aspect or attribute common to all firms in that industry; (b) an aspect that is reducible to homogeneous units such as yards of cloth, value in pounds sterling, even though, strictly speaking, one yard of cloth differs with respect to chemical and other properties from others, and one pound sterling may differ in purchasing power from another, according to time and place; (c) an aspect capable of being clearly allocated to calendar time units. By contrast, it is not certain that entrepreneurial activity or technical changes were common to all units in the industry; no acceptable homogeneous units appeared to be available; and there was even some doubt as to how to date the distinguishable heterogeneous units in calendar time.

(2) Statistical data can be made practically *continuous* over time, i.e. can cover an historical period without serious breaks. This too results from the selection of a measurable stream of events, which can be properly assigned to fairly narrow time units. These, theoretically, could be made so narrow (e.g. days for the production of houses, or months for the building of ships) that output data, measured in such units, would be discontinuous. But for most practical purposes, particularly for the time scale involved in the study of long-term economic changes of social aggregates, statistical data can be made continuous.

By contrast, the very selection necessary in handling episodic and other non-quantitative data, the choice of important or strategic episodes, suggest discontinuity. In the ordinary historical account of an industry or a nation, the primary data form a discontinuous succession of innovations, changes in technique, wars, internal conflicts, legislative reforms, etc. Whatever continuity over time appears in such accounts is either the result of further treatment of primary data, some broader concept introduced by the narrator to bridge the gap, or is often provided by the imagination of the reader who brings to the record dimly felt or explicitly formulated notions of the continuous life of the body social as a background, against which the jerky succession of conspicuous events can be accepted as the proper choice for emphasis.

(3) The most important characteristic of statistical data is, of course, their *comparability*—over time and space. Once a measurable aspect of an unequivocally identifiable stream of events has been defined, the resulting totals can be added, subtracted, divided, and multiplied—in short they can be subjected to the full variety of numerical manipulations that reveal, with ease and precision, the relative weights of different time and space segments. This is of course an oversimplified picture of the power of measurement, considering the errors possible in any empirical measures, particularly those of social phenomena. Yet within broad limits, no matter how hard it may be to define such limits precisely in various concrete situations, this characteristic of comparability is by and large a true one.

Contrast with this the difficulty of attaching relative weights and of comparing events recorded in non-quantitative terms. It is true that when we are familiar with the rough magnitudes of their consequences we can easily judge their relative weights. Thus, the series of technical changes in the iron industry in eighteenth-century England associated with the names of Derby, Onions, Granage, Wilkinson, Cort, etc., portray clearly an important event in terms of the magnitude and ramifications of the industry made possible by them; a more important event, say, than one signified by a patent for an improved spittoon. Similarly, there is little doubt that the invention and improvement of the steam engine was more important than the improvement in textile dyes; or that the evolution of the modern corporate form of organization had greater relative weight, in terms of the consequences, than changes in income taxes imposed upon unincorporated firms. But these judgements are based upon rough knowledge of the magnitudes of consequences in the economic development of industrial nations—in which terms the disparity between two events in each comparison was so obvious as to make measurement unnecessary. Outside of such striking examples of 'more' or 'less', obvious by direct observation, comparing magnitudes of non-quantitatively recorded events presents difficult problems indeed.

(4) The aspects or attributes of social aggregates selected for measurement may differ in scope, but it is possible, with statistical data, to derive broader totals from narrower, while retaining the identity of the latter. The addibility of such data into synthetic and articulated totals (e.g. total

production from subtotals for single industries, the general price level from a variety of individual prices, etc.) is one of their most valuable features, and one deserving special mention even though it is due to their comparability. It permits a wide and comprehensive view of the whole social aggregate and of its components, albeit in terms of a single aspect of the aggregate's manifold activities. Anyone who has ever tried to write a history of a social aggregate realizes how difficult it is, by using non-quantitative information, to achieve such breadth of coverage, combined with a distinction of parts treated on a comparable basis. There is always the fear that the particular series of events chosen for presentation may omit the more important; and there is always the difficulty of emphasizing parts in proportion to their true importance.

Because of their comprehensiveness and continuity, statistical data often convey a picture of historical change that differs strikingly from that of other records. One turns from historical accounts of a country based largely on non-quantitative data and presenting a succession of revolutions, wars, social movements and conflicts, domestic and international controversies, a whole stream of stirring and striking episodes, to some long statistical series only to find, with surprise, hardly a ripple in the steady movement of the figures. This contrast is most noticeable when the series is of broad coverage and relates to fundamental social processes such as growth of population or movements in total production. Even the most striking events seem to leave little trace on these statistical records: e.g. in the series of total production in the United States there are no readily apparent changes marking World War I; and in the over-all indices of production in Great Britain prepared by Walter Hoffman the Industrial Revolution does not appear as a truly revolutionary upheaval.

The contrast between the placidity of the statistical series and the jerkiness of the non-quantitative record is not unlike that between the daily newspaper with its spate of individual, domestic and international catastrophes and acts of heroism, and life viewed broadly, plodding its accustomed course—although the comparison is manifestly unfair to the serious efforts of historical study.

Because of these characteristics of completeness, continuity, and comparability, statistical data suffer from many obvious defects. Because they are comprehensive and continuous, they are not selective within the aspect of measurement once chosen and defined. They add the strategic and the unimportant, the common and the exceptional; and they necessarily refer to results, not to concealed factors and motives. For the scholars to whom the decisions of leaders, the behaviour of the *élite*, the myths of the wider community, are strategic elements in social life, statistical data are just so much historical refuse. And for the economic historian to whom the activities of the heroic entrepreneurs or the violent struggles of the social classes are the motive power of economic change, statistical data may be little more than an unimportant background or materials for a scholarly façade to preconceived conclusions. But even if we do not share this attitude, we can still argue that statistical data, particularly those of wide

coverage, are insensitive and unselective; and may be of little assistance in spotting the strategic conjunctures in the course of historical change, or in revealing their determining factors.

Such defects of statistical data are important only if their supply is limited: given a plentiful supply, statistical analysis could attain greater penetration into the fabric of historical change than can now be effected. But the crux of the difficulty lies exactly in the selective poverty of the supply of statistics. If it were possible to reduce all the varied aspects of social aggregates to quantitative terms, and then secure observations for all these measurable aspects, statistical data would provide an unexcelled basis for thoroughgoing analysis of historical change. But by their very nature the supply of such data is much more limited than that of non-quantitative information.

This greater scarcity is due to a variety of factors, the most obvious being that the intellectual decisions involved in rendering an aspect of social life measurable can be applied to only a few aspects, and no such limiting decisions logically precede the collection of non-quantitative data. But we can deal with these and other limitations in the supply of statistics more effectively when considering the various ways in which systematic historical accounts are derived.

III

The historical accounts of changes in human society can be distinguished as time-specific, system-specific and system-general.

Time-specific accounts are those that deal with changes in a social aggregate within specific stretches of time, whether the period is long or short, and whether one or several aspects of social change are included. In this category are the thousands of histories of nations, cities, regions, industries, institutions, firms, etc.—all aggregates that have a definite locus in space and are dealt with over a specific stretch of time. The distinctive feature of these accounts is that the United States from 1790 to 1950, or the agriculture of France from 1600 to 1750, or the political vicissitudes of India from 300 B.C. to A.D. 1950, are *not* treated as *type cases* and are not viewed as illustrations of some system that may have variant space and time co-ordinates in the real world. They are accounts of interest in, and of, themselves, even though the authors may have theoretical axes to grind or their judgements may constitute a philosophy of historical change. The presumable interest in such time-specific histories lies partly in the identification of the historian with the particular human institution whose past has meaning to him and to others because of consciousness of kind; partly in the fact that it is the first level of organization of the primary raw materials, antecedent to any further generalization.

System-specific accounts presuppose some general concept, e.g. merchant capitalism, industrial capitalism, the city economy, the agricultural slave empire, etc. Each concept implies a system in the sense that various strands and facets of society are assumed to be interrelated in a coherent way specific to that system and not typical of others. Similarities or some

common component among several systems are, however, not excluded. Each system may be found in different localities at different historical periods even though some wide limits, spatial and temporal, may be set to each. Thus, we may have an historical account of industrial capitalism, or of capitalism in general, which organizes data for a variety of countries and for specific historical periods—yet indicating space and time limits within which known manifestations of the system can be found.

If the system is widespread enough, and provokes the interest of the analytically minded, a model of its growth and decay may be evolved. In such a theory, of which the Marxian treatment of capitalist development is a conspicuous example, certain propulsive factors, which drive the system forward from its beginning to its maturity and to its transformation into the next system, are singled out. Or, as in the case of the classical economists, the propulsive factors may be shown as exhausting themselves toward the standstill of a stationary state. The system-specific accounts thus vary from largely factual recitals of the system's manifestations under somewhat different guises in different places and at different times (but always with a principle of organization necessarily suggested by the growth and spread of the system under study) to rather forced and brittle generalizations concerning the forces immanent in the system, which propel it forward to maturity and further, either to stability or to a violent end.

When several systems are studied and a common pattern either in their succession or in some of their formal characteristics of birth, growth and decay, is established the result is a system-general account. To this category belong all attempts to generalize from human history, ranging from the dogmatic, but at least hard and fast, theories of 'stages' to the more nebulous products of philosophies of history. Many of these attempts are not sufficiently specific to be designated historical accounts in the true sense of that term. But, regardless of their validity, the attempts are steps toward imposing some intellectual order upon manifold reality, and thus may provide better orientation for analysis. Furthermore, they do use the specific historical accounts as raw material, and constitute the next order of generalization in direct line of succession from the time-specific accounts.

The peculiar selectiveness in the supply of statistical data can now be considered in relation to the types of historical account distinguished. The first cause of such selectiveness, already noted, lies in the fact that some aspects of historical reality, because of their very nature, cannot be reduced to a measurable basis. For example, the historical succession of ideas in any field, whether in that of religion, technology, views on society, or political regulation, cannot be translated into quantitative measures of volume and of change.

Therefore, even in time-specific accounts, some important aspects of historical change cannot be recorded in statistics. Even in the field of economic history, where the raw material of experience is perhaps more susceptible of measurement than in many other special fields (intellectual, political, diplomatic, etc.), some crucial aspects, such as those relating to

technical changes, varying motivations of economic agents whether as individuals or groups, the streams of legislative regulation, and the like, are not, in and of themselves, subject to statistical measurement. Some of their assignable results are. And development of sampling techniques, combined with improved interview methods, may yield measurements of motivation of a type not heretofore available. But even for these elements of historical reality, *past* experience, our only source of information, could not be measured so as to reveal the magnitude of many important changes and factors.

The same selectiveness is even more limiting in system-specific accounts, in so far as important strands in the system, by their very nature, may not be susceptible of measurement. When Sombart stresses rational calculation and the pursuit of profit as a key characteristic of the capitalist system, and when Schumpeter traces the probable decay of this system to a climate of growing hostility to capitalist enterprise, they both emphasize aspects that cannot be treated statistically. Even in the Marxian analysis of capitalist development, which derives trends (relative impoverishment of the working classes, increasing polarization between a decreasing proportion of capitalist exploiters and an increasing proportion of the proletariat, etc.) that can be gauged and tested by statistics, the underlying theory concerning the increasing intensity of the class struggle is a characterization of group attitudes that in and of itself is not susceptible of quantitative treatment (this is also true of the interpretation of the role of the state, or of many other crucial facets in Marxian theory). And if the selectiveness of statistical data, their limitation to the few aspects of historical reality that are reducible to homogeneous units, is so crippling in the case of system-specific accounts, it is obviously even more limiting in the more ambitious system-general accounts that deal with more than one form of social organization.

But there is another source of limitation in the supply of statistical data. Some aspects of historical reality may be measurable in that they concern events that are reducible to homogeneous units subject to count, but these events may occur under social conditions in which the people in direct touch with such events do not measure them. For example, the yield of agricultural crops or the output of a handicraftsman is, in and of itself, statistically measurable, but in many societies the producer may have neither the incentive nor the ability to keep account of the results of his labour. Under such conditions it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, for any organ of society to collect reliable statistics on production.

This reason for the selectiveness of statistics is, in some ways, more crucial than that formerly discussed because, even for measurable aspects of historical reality, it produces a bias in the supply of data in favour of highly circumscribed types of social conditions. It explains why statistics are so widely used in time-specific accounts for some countries and are completely absent in accounts for other countries; why, for one and the same country, such data abound for some periods and not for others. In system-specific accounts it results either in complete absence of statistics

for some systems or in a peculiarly slanted supply of such data for others, illuminating only some phrases in their development. And it, of course, makes all the more difficult the adequate use of statistical data and methods in system-general accounts.

The third reason for the limitation in the supply of statistics has already been noted. Granted that a given aspect of historical reality is reducible to a measurable base and that such measurement is sufficiently widespread to make the collection of data possible, an agency with power to elicit and collect the information and the desire to make it available is still required. The resources and authority necessary to collect the information are ordinarily available only to the sovereign organs of society (except for some private statistics-conscious groups), but the information will not be collected until the need for it is recognized by the commanding organs of society, and it may not be made available (or even preserved) unless its release is deemed useful. Here again is required the combination of a government strong enough, and possessing the resources, to secure the information; intelligent enough to appreciate the need for it; and a social climate where such information is released as a matter of course (*vide* the practices in recent years of the governments behind the Iron Curtain). These requirements mean a further selectiveness, a further limitation of statistical data to societies in which such governments exist and in which the corresponding social climate prevails. This third reason for the limitation upon the supply of statistical data only re-enforces its biased selectiveness, with obvious consequences when the data are used in any type of systematic accounts of historical change.

IV

The characteristics of statistical data, their completeness, continuity, and comparability, discussed under section II, and the limitations upon their supply, discussed under section III, together are the sources of many pitfalls when statistics are used in the analysis of historical change. While the number and variety of such pitfalls cannot be compared with those involved in the use of less selective non-quantitative information, and no conclusion as to the relative magnitude of temptation to go wrong can be derived, the dangers in the use of statistical data are perhaps not as obvious, particularly to those not familiar with statistical techniques. Thus, it may be of interest to digress somewhat and state briefly the major dangers in the statistical analysis of historical change.

(1) *Only partial awareness of possible errors in primary
or derived statistics*

The surface precision of quantitative indices, combined with the difficulty of ascertaining the methods used in their compilation, often lead to easy acceptance of the data, and hence to their analysis, without previous inquiry into possible errors. The problems created by these errors are, in their turn, not easily handled, since social statistics are not results of controlled experiments but products of changing institutions tha

refer to other changing institutions. The errors, therefore, are themselves complex historical phenomena, not easily ascertainable or reducible to quantities. Whatever the cause, the result is a rather common pitfall in the statistical analysis of historical data, attributing significance to differences or changes that, considering the possible errors, may well be an illusion.¹

(2) *Confusion between complete coverage of available data and universality*

In view of the selective bias in the supply of statistical data, particularly if further limiting criteria (minimum length of period, continuity, etc.) are employed, complete inclusion of available data is no assurance that a great variety of social conditions have been covered. On the contrary, it would be more justifiable to assume that the coverage is biased in favour of certain types of society, and that many others are completely omitted. It follows that any generalization based on even the most exhaustive treatment of available statistical series is necessarily valid only for selected kinds of society and period.

An example of this type of generalization can be found in Raymond Pearl's claim that the simple logistic curve represents a 'law' of population growth in that it describes invariant tendencies in human population under a variety of conditions.² The statistical basis for this generalization consists of a number of series on population growth for different countries, a fairly exhaustive list as far as data were available at that time. Yet a review of the data indicates that they are heavily concentrated on the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, particularly on the second half of the nineteenth; that almost all countries covered were within the orbit of Western civilization; and that, even disregarding some crucial exceptions, any generalization derived from them would be limited to Western countries in the period ranging roughly from 1850 to 1920—scarcely an adequate basis for a 'law' invariant to social conditions.

(3) *The danger of inference from incomplete periods*

In many cases, it is difficult to secure statistical data for periods when an activity was in its embryonic stage of turbulent growth, or when it passed through some cataclysmic changes. This necessarily limits the available record to only a part—even if the longer part—of the period of growth. Generalizations derived even from fully available statistical data are likely to be limited, therefore, to incomplete periods, in which the missing phases differ distinctively from those covered. Hence any 'law' derived under such conditions cannot be a law that covers the full cycle of growth and decay of a given activity or institution.

¹ For recent discussion of this point see Oscar Morgenstern, *On the Accuracy of Economic Observations*, Princeton University Press (Princeton, 1950); and my review of this monograph in the *Journal of the American Statistical Association* (Dec. 1950), vol. 75, pp. 576–9.

² See, among other writings, his *The Biology of Population Growth* (New York, 1925).

An example of this type of danger is provided by several studies of secular trends in industrial output.¹ In these studies an attempt was made to find all the long series of industrial output for a variety of industries in one or several countries, and to express their secular trends by some simple mathematical model. The difficulty was not only in the selective bias of the existing series with respect to country and industry, but also that, for a new industry, statistics were not likely to be available until there was a considerable volume of output, and that for all industries covered, the period of some major disturbance (say a major war) was often ruled out of account as not representing 'normal' growth. It follows that the simple curves fitted to such series describe, under these conditions, only limited phases of growth and are valid only so long as major changes (of the type excluded) do not occur.

(4) *The danger of overlooking the changing or varying significance of statistically measurable phenomena in the total*

The measurable aspects of historical change may expand over time, or differ in their relative proportions to the total among various economies. Hence, in studying temporal changes and spatial differences in statistical indices it is necessary to consider the bias introduced by the changing or different proportion of the measurable to the total. But recognition of this bias is no assurance of ability to adjust for it.

A notable case of this difficulty, which becomes a pitfall when overlooked, is provided by national income, the most comprehensive measure of a country's economy and a gauge of its total current net output. The customary exclusion from this total of services rendered within the household, and of other services not designed for the market, means that at any given time the measure covers only part of the total volume of economic goods produced; that over time, in a country in the process of industrialization, the proportion of total economic activity covered by the measure increases; and that at a given time the measure is more complete for industrialized than for under-developed countries. Yet it is widely employed with inadequate or no correction at all for these biases.

(5) *Confusion between adequacy of fit of a mathematical model and its specific suitability to a given body of data*

In the statistical analysis of historical changes or diversities the statistician often employs mathematical models designed to summarize the significant features of movements over time or differences across space. Because of the limitations of the data with respect to time, place, etc., the possible patterns of change over time in them (as well as other aspects) are simple and limited, and therefore can be described easily by many mathematical models, varying in complexity and structure. The fact that *one* model may

¹ See the author's *Secular Movements in Production and Prices* (Boston, 1930); Arthur F. Burns, *Production Trends in the United States, since 1870* (NBER, 1934); L. H. Dupriez, *Des Mouvements Economiques Généraux* (Louvain, 1947).

fit is no proof that it alone describes the 'law' of the phenomena, a conclusion often tempting to statisticians.

Raymond Pearl's experiment here, too, is a good illustration. Population figures at decennial intervals for periods rarely exceeding 100 years for Western countries all show a simple pattern of movement, either a straight line on a logarithmic scale or a line with a single bend in it. That the logistic curve fits all these series is no indication that it, and it alone, describes the 'law'. A few dozen other mathematical models might have done as well. There was, in this case, a disproportion between the emphasis upon a specific mathematical model and the feeble power of discrimination between it and other models that could be secured from the limited body of empirical data available.

(6) *Mechanical projection beyond observed experience*

This danger is closely associated with the one just noted. The numerical character of statistical data lends itself to the use of mathematical models; the use of a mathematical model, once accepted, permits the statistician to apply it to extend the numerical values beyond the observed range (i.e. interpolate for missing periods, or extrapolate for the future). And since, by analogy with natural science, the crowning result is a prediction of the future, the temptation to employ the mathematical model for this purpose is often too great to be resisted.

But in order to have a legitimate basis for prediction, the statistician must know that the trend, expressible by a given model and by *it alone*, is invariant under a great variety of different conditions. Even disregarding the difficulty noted under (5), that of deciding whether the given model is the best or the only one, the available statistical data may cover only a limited variety of conditions and hence fail to provide a proper test of invariance. To illustrate: the fact that all Western countries showed a retardation in the rate of growth in population, largely as a result of the decline in birth-rates since the 1880's, may be no basis for forecasting retardation for the next fifty years. Between 1880 and 1939 there were no devastating wars such as were fought between 1939 and 1945; and if wars become recurrent the trend that held in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries may no longer persist. In other words, the selectivity that limits statistical data to certain types of social systems and periods also limits their use in testing invariance of an generalization that can be so easily expressed by mathematical models, which in turn offer a tempting basis for prediction.

V

The brief notes above may contrast too sharply the advantages of statistical data due to their numerical character, with the disadvantages due to unavoidable limitation and selective bias in their supply. Many existing statistics are so riddled with errors that they are reliable only within wide limits, and thus make useful numerical manipulations difficult, if not impossible. For many historical situations, despite limitations on the

supply of statistics, some tolerable approximations to quantitative dimensions are possible and highly useful. Indeed, such approximations can be found in historical accounts which otherwise rely almost exclusively upon non-quantitative information. After all, it is important in any account to give some notion of the number of people in the social aggregate being studied, of the size of the area they occupy, of their economic productivity and standard of living, and the like. In terms of rough magnitudes, statistics are the warp and woof of the cloth woven by the historian.

Nevertheless, the central idea is largely true, even if over-emphasized. Statistical data that satisfy some minimum criteria of accuracy, continuity, and comprehensiveness possess advantages for analysis that cannot be attained with non-quantitative information; and the supply of *such* statistical data is necessarily and sharply limited to but few aspects of selected historical epochs and but few forms of social organization. Thus it becomes impossible to use statistical data widely in universal history; and broad generalizations from their analysis are difficult, and are likely to be erroneous when attempted without full cognizance of the selective bias in their supply.

The moral is not, of course, that we should forbear from the use of statistical data. On the contrary, their peculiar advantage makes them an extremely important type of primary information, not equalled or replaceable by other types of data. Their use should be more widespread and intensive than heretofore—but divorced from the rather mechanistic approach that employs mathematical models as hasty simulacra of controlled experimental situations (which they are not), and wedded to full cognizance of the variety and mutability of historical changes in human society.

Developments in economics during recent decades, and in the accumulation of statistical data since at least the early nineteenth century, serve to increase the promise of the use of statistics and statistical methods in the study of the economic growth of nations during the last one and a half to two centuries.

The spread of the industrial system to an increasing number of countries, and its progressively deeper penetration into the fabric of social life, mean a growing supply of statistics of steadily improving quality and increasing wealth of detail. This trend is due to a variety of factors, among which are the growing measurability and practice of accounting in everyday life, the greater resources and interest on the part of governments, better techniques for collecting and recording the information, and the like. The supply of *economic* statistics has been particularly enriched because of the increasing value that society places upon performance in the field of economic attainment rather than in the field of religions, culture, etc.

Of special note is the continuity of these data over time and their cumulatively increasing value due to the increasingly long periods which they cover. Basic statistics are available for at least the last century for from six to twelve major political units, if we can judge by the known estimates of national income. Thus a statistical framework of economic

growth can perhaps be built for a sufficient number of *industrialized* nations to permit valuable comparisons and analyses (total population and its economic components, total production and its industrial structure, distribution of national product between consumption and capital accumulation, relative importance of foreign trade and other components of across-the-boundary flows, etc.).

Even in the under-developed countries, where statistical records are poor and of recent origin (two characteristics which usually go hand in hand), there have been strenuous efforts in recent years to fill the gap, by intensified statistical work within the countries or by the various international agencies. While the resulting statistics are too recent for the study of long-term changes, they reflect societies with a type of organization and at a stage of economic development significantly different from those characterizing the developed nations for which statistics are so much more plentiful. In short, they serve to reduce the selective bias in the supply of economic statistics.

Economic analysts have become increasingly aware of the value of statistical data and methods in the study of the institutional variety of economic phenomena and of their mutability over time. Widespread use of statistics for analytical purposes is highly effective in testing the reliability of the data and providing bases for improvements in their quality, as well as giving an important stimulus toward organizing the data for the past into a more systematic picture. In the recent two or three decades we have become increasingly familiar with statistical data, and have added to the skills and methods of handling them for analysis of historical change.

Indeed, the developments noted above raise the question whether the time has not come for a more intensive and systematic use of statistical data in the study of the comparative history of economic growth of at least the industrialized nations of the world; for an effort to construct a comparable statistical framework of such growth in which the major events and changing relations of the determining factors (at least some of which are susceptible of measurement and of statistical analysis) could be grouped. Any attempt at such a comparative study will face formidable difficulties—even if limited to the economically developed countries during the era of the spread of the industrial system (i.e. since the end of the eighteenth century). And for reasons already considered, the statistical framework and analysis will have to be subordinated to a wider view of social change that would use all types of data and more than one method of analysis. But this more intensive use of statistical data and methods may well assist in reaching a more testable view of the past economic growth of developed nations, a more balanced appraisal of the determining factors, than has been available heretofore. Above all, if the effort succeeds in escaping the pitfalls noted above, it should provide a modest but firm base upon which further work can be securely grounded—avoiding the waste of continuous revision and assuring effective accumulation of tested findings.

University of Pennsylvania

THE ELIZABETHAN ARISTOCRACY

AN ANATOMY ANATOMIZED

By H. R. TREVOR-ROPER

I

THAT the Elizabethan aristocracy, as a class, was in financial difficulties, and that these difficulties were due to a combination of fixed income from land with a steady rise in prices and habits of competitive extravagance, are conclusions generally accepted by modern historians. The evidence was clearly and briefly summarized by Prof. Tawney in his introduction to Thomas Wilson's *Discourse on Usury*. In the *Economic History Review* (1948), xviii, nos. 1 and 2, Mr Lawrence Stone dwelt on this subject in some detail under the title 'The Anatomy of the Elizabethan Aristocracy'. This article reinforced the general conclusion with a great mass of circumstantial detail and incidental historical knowledge, and carried that conclusion further than ever before. It presented the Elizabethan aristocracy as not merely impoverished and embarrassed but, by a long history of 'gross incompetence and unparalleled extravagance', 'poised on the brink of financial ruin', and only kept from total collapse by desperate expedients and shameless rapacity. Mr Stone's evident familiarity with the sources (many of which are neither printed, nor hitherto used, nor easy to interpret) naturally commands respect and confers authority, and it is therefore likely that the detailed figures which he has given will be used by scholars as a basis for further conclusions. For this reason it is obviously important that the accuracy of such figures should be unquestionable. In fact, having worked over the same material, I believe that his figures are often inaccurate and, in many vital respects, misleading. In this note I wish to examine the general questions of their reliability.

In general, it seems to me that Mr Stone has approached this whole subject somewhat hastily. He accepts without question Aubrey's enjoyable story about the return of the nuns to Wilton under Mary (p. 2, note), although there is no evidence that Wilton ever saw a nun after the Dissolution. He assumes that clergymen could be knights (p. 10) when, in fact, the title 'Sir' regularly given to them was simply the Elizabethan equivalent of 'the Rev.'. To support a psychological generalization he confuses Thomas Lord Vaux, the poet, who died in 1556, with William Lord Vaux, 'the unfortunatest peer for poverty that ever was', who died in 1595 (p. 30, note), and supposes that a poem by Sir Edward Dyer was occasioned by a disappointment which occurred long after its publication. Contradicting all constitutional authorities, he states that peers were liable to imprisonment for debt, and supports this statement by references which,

on examination, prove either incorrect or irrelevant (p. 34).¹ And his conclusion that the financial ruin of the aristocracy was due in part to the expense of court appointments (pp. 15–18) at least needs some adjustment if it is to be compatible with his other conclusion that only the profits of court appointments could save them from such ruin (p. 28). Further, the evidence he has used for the financial condition of the aristocracy is sometimes unduly selective. He quotes Prof. Conyers Read's biography of Sir Francis Walsingham to show that Walsingham (whom he apparently reckons as a peer) died owing £12,016 to the Queen (p. 17), but prudently abridges his quotation to exclude the evidence that the Queen owed at least as much to Walsingham.² His statement (p. 17) that the third Earl of Sussex 'died in debt with a revenue of £450 a year, and debts to the Queen to be paid off at a rate of £500 a year' is only reached by genealogical and arithmetical confusion;³ his conclusions about the finances of the ninth Earl of Northumberland (p. 45) are in unexplained opposition to the very full account of his financial history which the fifth earl himself recorded in his *Advice to His Son*;⁴ and his description of the Earl of Worcester as driven by 'increasing poverty' to the desperate remedy of frugality in the country is difficult to square with the fact that the earl's son, the first Marquis of Worcester, without any intervening windfall, was credited with a revenue of £24,000 a year and, together with his son, the second marquis, spent] (as it₁ was afterwards claimed) £918,000 in the service of Charles I.⁵

¹ The instance on which Mr Stone bases this generalization is that of the Earl of Lincoln, who was imprisoned in the Fleet (the correct references are H.M.C. Marquis of Salisbury, x, 400, xi, 211; and cf. Harleian MS. 6995, fol. 77, 79); but if Mr Stone had examined the Earl's litigious life a little more closely he would have seen that this imprisonment was not for debt, but the result of proceedings in the Star Chamber. On the general question of liability, it is true that in 1587, in the case of *Harris v. Lord Mountjoy*, the Judges of the Common Pleas expressed an opinion that peers might be arrested on a statute for debt; but this opinion seems never to have been admitted in practice. See Leonard, *Reports*, pt. II, 173–4 (I owe this reference to Mr J. P. Cooper).

² Conyers Read, *Mr Secretary Walsingham* (1925), III, 444. Walsingham's claims against the Crown were afterwards allowed.

³ Mr Stone refers, for this statement, to H.M.C. Marquis of Salisbury, XII, 349. This document (as printed in full in Lodge, *Illustrations of British History* (1791), II, 356) shows (a) not that the third Earl's total revenue was only £450 p.a. but that he left only this sum to his brother, and (b) not that the third Earl owed £500 p.a. to the Queen, but that his brother and successor afterwards owed this sum by the accumulation of debts owed by his grandfather, father, brother, 'and also of my own debts'. On p. 48, Mr Stone says that the third Earl owed well over £14,000 to the Queen; but his own evidence (p. 44) shows that this figure refers not to the third, but to the fifth Earl—who, incidentally, was the nephew, not the grandson, of the third (p. 48).

⁴ Ed. G. B. Harrison (1930), pp. 79 ff. On p. 45, Mr Stone confuses the seventh and eighth earls.

⁵ H. Dircks, *Life of the Marquis of Worcester* (1865), pp. 54, 334. To support his version of the Earl's poverty Mr Stone gives four references to H.M.C. Marquis of Salisbury (in fact they are only three, since one is an eighteenth-century copy of another), none of which justifies such a conclusion.

But the most serious objection to Mr Stone's very detailed account of aristocratic finances seems to lie in the very details which constitute the core and apparent value of his article. He has himself, in another article, emphasized the importance of an accurate statistical approach to the economic problems of the sixteenth century.¹ Conversely, wrong statistics are worse than no statistics. In my opinion, Mr Stone's statistics, in this article, are demonstrably wrong. It seems to me that he has imperfectly understood and interpreted the principal evidence which he has used on this subject, and from which he has drawn the most far-reaching conclusions. I refer to the Recognizances for Debt on Statute Staple, now, by some administrative accident, preserved among the Lord Chamberlain's papers in the Public Record Office. To understand them, it is necessary to examine more closely than he has done the system of which such records are the evidence.

II

A borrower wishing to take up money on Statute Staple or on Statute Merchant applied to a lender and, in return for the loan, gave to him a kind of bond known as a *recognizance*, or acknowledgement of obligation already incurred. This *recognizance*, or bond (both terms are used), was enforceable at law and obliged the borrower to pay to the lender, at a specified date in the future, a certain sum of money. This obligation to pay was, however, conditional: the borrower was only obliged to pay the sum mentioned in the bond if he had failed to observe the condition of the bond, which was separately recorded. This *condition* (in the majority of the cases with which we are concerned) was the repayment of the loan, at a given time, together with interest on it at the statutory rate of 10% *per annum*. In spite of its form, the bond was thus not a record of a loan; it gave security for a loan, and as such it naturally gave security for a much greater sum than the loan itself. In fact, as a general rule, the bond was made out for a sum a little less than twice the amount of the loan.

When the time of payment specified in the bond was at hand, the borrower could act in one of three ways. First, he could repay the loan with the interest on it. In that case the bond was *defeasanced* or cancelled by slashing, or other recognized method, and no longer enforceable. Secondly, he could apply for *forbearance*, i.e. for continuation of the loan, at the usual rate of interest. If this were granted, a new bond might be issued, or the date at which the old bond became enforceable might be deferred by a legally valid document. In general, a *bona fide* borrower had no difficulty in obtaining such forbearance from a respectable lender, since it represented a useful service to both parties. Thirdly, the borrower might default. In that case the bond was *forfeit*: i.e. the lender was legally able to enforce payment of the full security stated in the bond, and thus compensate himself for the labour and cost of collection. This, of course, only occurred in a minority of cases: in the majority of cases the bond

¹ L. Stone, 'Elizabethan Overseas Trade', in *Econ. Hist. Rev.* (1949), 2nd S., I, 30.

represented neither the sum advanced nor the sum repaid, but was merely a means whereby the lender could, if necessary, insist on full and prompt repayment of the loan.

These transactions were all private transactions between borrower and lender, and all the necessary documents—the *bond* (giving the security), the *condition* (stating the loan), and the *defeasance* (cancelling the security after repayment)—passed directly between the two parties, who were thus fully equipped for any legal action which might arise. They were, however, officially registered. Originally (since the system had been evolved by and for merchants, and the parties were presumed to be merchants) recognizances on Statute Staple had been registered before the Mayor of the Staple in Staple towns, recognizances on Statute Merchant before the chief magistrates of the trading towns concerned. But in course of time others than merchants found the system convenient and it was abused. It was therefore regulated. By the Statute 23 Hen. VIII, c. 6, the local mayors of the Staple were forbidden to register recognizances except for *bona fide* merchants, and a new centralized system was set up in London to provide for those men who, not being merchants, nevertheless wished to lend and borrow money by this convenient method. The obligations contracted under this Act were technically known as ‘Recognizances in the nature of a Statute Staple’, and they were officially registered in the presence of one of the two chief justices or (in vacation) before the Mayor of the Staple in Westminster and the Recorder of London. By a later statute (27 Eliz. c. 4) such registration (which was evidently extended to include loans on Statute Merchant)¹ was made a necessary condition of legal action for recovery. The records of this registration are the records from which Mr Stone has drawn so much of his evidence.

To interpret these records, it is necessary to realize first that, since it was the bond, not the repayment of the loan, that was legally enforceable, only the bond, not the condition, was normally registered; and secondly, that since the registration of the bond was in the interest, and was the responsibility, of the lender, the cancellation of the bond, which terminated the interest of the lender, was not necessarily recorded. A borrower might indeed wish to have such cancellation recorded, and if so he could do so by presenting his defeasance to the clerk at the Statute Office and paying a fee; but in general (it would seem), since he had already received a legally valid defeasance, he saw no reason to pay an additional fee for a superfluous receipt. In consequence these documents, while they give a complete record of the securities offered for such loans, do not necessarily record either the sums advanced or the fact of repayment. Nevertheless, as

¹ Mr Stone—presumably misled by Giuseppe, *Guide to the Public Records* (1923-4), II, 45—consistently describes all these transactions as loans on Statute Merchant. This is incorrect. Although the Statute 27 Eliz. c. 4 refers (as the statute of Henry VIII does not) to Statute Merchant, in fact almost all these records are of loans in the nature of Statute Staple. There are a few exceptions recorded in L.C. 4/219 (Ind. 8961); but among these the records of noble borrowing are negligible.

a general rule, it can be assumed that the sums advanced were equivalent to one-half, or slightly more than one-half, of the security demanded; and that repayment was made in the usual way, whether recorded or not. Mr Stone says (p. 50) that the absence of any official record of repayment 'usually seems to mean that land was surrendered in exchange'. I do not know why he should make this statement, which (as far as I can find) is supported by neither evidence nor probability. Mr Stone also presumes that the words *capta in rure*, occasionally used in these records, indicate the surrender of land to the creditor (p. 22, note). This seems to me most improbable.¹

With this preliminary explanation, it is now possible to examine Mr Stone's use of this and such evidence. In using it, he seems to me to have erred in the following ways:

(1) By assuming that the difference between the amount of the loan and the value of the bond represented the difference between the amount advanced and the amount to be repaid (instead of the difference between loan and security) he has greatly exaggerated the gains and rapacity of the lenders. He suggests (p. 22) that the system was in fact 'a form of speculation upon the bankruptcy of the borrower' and that the moneylender lent in the 'certainty' of forfeiture instead of the expectation of interest: i.e. that such forfeiture was, in effect, the expected interest on the loan. 'Not infrequently', he writes, 'the recognizance was made out for as much as 80 % or 100 % over and above the actual cash advance'—as if it were surprising that the security should be greater than the loan (in fact this figure was not merely 'not infrequent'; it was regular); and to illustrate his point, he quotes (p. 23, note) 'an extreme case':

Henry Brooke... borrowed £100 off one William [in fact Thomas] Wright, giving him a bond for £200. Unable to meet this obligation at the appointed time, he borrowed £200 to repay Wright from another moneylender, giving the latter a bond for £300 in return for this new loan. Thus in just over a year, his original £100 had involved him in a £300 debt—the equivalent of 200 % interest.

¹ In ordinary Latin *rus* = 'the country' as distinct from the town, not land as distinct from other assets; and such a construction would anyway be surprising. Nor does the use of these words in the Recognizance Books seem to correspond with such relevant transfers of land as I have happened to trace. In any case the phrase is an office note and must refer to the procedure (which alone concerned the clerk), not to the details of payment which were outside his interest. It may mean that the recognizance was taken (i.e. the debt acknowledged) not in London but in the country, either before the Chief Justice on circuit or before commissioners. Alternately it may mean that an inquest on lands and chattels had been taken, as security, by the sheriff. Some inquests, under such statutes, beginning with the words *Inquisicio capta apud Doncastriam* etc., are printed in Hubert Hall, *Select Cases concerning the Law Merchant*, vol. III (Selden Soc. 1932), pp. 76–81. On the subject in general see also G. Jacob, *Law Dictionary* (ed. T. E. Tomlins, 1797), s.v. 'Statute Merchant', 'Statute Staple' and 'Recognizance'.

Even if the facts here stated are correct (which is dubious)¹ the conclusion deduced from them is a complete *non sequitur*. No evidence is here given to show that Brooke forfeited either of his bonds, and the final figure of £300, being not a 'debt' but a security, is no proper basis for the calculation of interest. In fact, of course, moneylending was an ordinary form of business investment: a moneylender was not going to ruin his business by shortening credit in the hope of confiscating security. But Mr Stone does not think of this. Confusing security with debts, and interest with security, he naturally credits the Elizabethan moneylenders with extraordinary rapacity. He twice describes them as 'vultures' (pp. 14, 47) feeding on aristocratic 'carriage', and refers to Thomas Sutton as 'the greatest blood-sucker of the aristocracy' (p. 12, note). In fact, of course, the majority of them were simply successful merchants who invested their money where it was wanted and took reasonable precautions to ensure repayment. Their clients borrowed with their eyes open and had no cause for complaint. The system was one which had recently been endorsed by a Parliament composed not of vulturine financiers, but of noblemen and gentry. I have worked through all the papers of Thomas Sutton and find no evidence that he either was or was regarded by his clients as being a 'bloodsucker'. In fact, the mercantile community transfused blood into Elizabethan noble families rather than sucking it out of them.

(2) Further, it seems to me that Mr Stone, by inadequate scrutiny and understanding of the Recognizances for Debt, has greatly exaggerated the indebtedness of the Elizabethan aristocracy. In my opinion he has done this in at least three ways:

(a) Having, for some purposes, confused bonds with capital *plus* interest, for other purposes he has confused bonds with loans. Thus the figures which he gives as loans in Appendix iv and elsewhere, and on which he calculates the indebtedness of the aristocracy, are the figures given in the Recognizance Books as bonds—i.e. not as loans but as security for loans. The corresponding figures for any individual loan would probably be about 55 % of Mr Stone's figure. Thus, in the case of the Earl of Cumberland (p. 47), Mr Stone records two 'loans' of £1000 each from Richard Humble, vintner. In fact, in these two cases the Recognizance Books record the conditions and the defeasances as well as the bonds. The bonds were indeed for £1000 each; but since the loans were repaid, these bonds were in fact cancelled and are of no further significance. The loans (which alone are relevant to the general question of the Earl's finances) were each of £575. This kind of confusion runs through the whole of Mr Stone's article and could be illustrated indefinitely.

(b) Further, Mr Stone seems to me to have misunderstood the system whereby debts were carried forward. A glance at his Appendix iv shows that he has

¹ In fact Mr Stone seems to me to have misunderstood the sense of the document, as well as misinterpreted his misunderstanding of it. The correct meaning of the document (H.M.C. Marquis of Salisbury, iv, 49) would appear to be that Brooke borrowed £100 from Wright and gave him, in the normal way, a bond for £200; that this bond, no doubt on Wright's insistence, was underwritten by one Vincent Engham (probably *not* a moneylender) as a co-guarantor with Brooke; and that Engham covered his risk of £200 by a bond from Brooke for £300.

entered separately several loans which are in fact merely continuations of previous loans. Thus in the case of the Earl of Derby (p. 46) he records a 'loan' of £10,000 from 'W. Cecil, Lord Burghley', contracted in 37 Eliz. (1594-5) and a 'loan' of £5000 from 'W. Cecil, Lord Burghley and Robert Cecil' contracted in 40 Eliz. (1597-8). Both these 'loans' (in fact they were bonds) were cancelled in 42 Eliz. (1599-1600). He further records that in 42 Eliz.—i.e. in the year in which these loans were cancelled—the Earl 'borrowed' £10,000 from 'T. Cecil Lord Burghley', and £5000 from Sir Robert Cecil. The relationship of these transactions is clear at a glance. William Cecil, Lord Burghley, died in 1598; and after his death Lord Derby's bonds to him were naturally cancelled and re-registered in the names of his sons. The second set of loans, in fact, is merely a continuation of the first, not an addition to it. Nevertheless, by adding these and such loans together, Mr Stone is able to record a 'vast debt accumulation' for which (by confusing the third with the fifth earl) he is also able to supply a lurid but unreliable background. In fact almost all the 'loans' recorded by Mr Stone were taken up from his relatives¹ by the sixth earl, whose estate was disturbed by the necessity of buying out the claims of the three co-heiresses of his brother, the fifth earl. It would probably be fairer to describe these transactions as exceptional family treaties than as typical commercial loans.

A similar case is provided by the Earl of Bedford (p. 49), to whom Mr Stone records three separate 'loans' (in fact they are bonds) of £20,000 each. One of these sums is recorded as 'borrowed' from Anne Countess of Warwick in 37 Eliz. (1594-5), one from her and Lord St John of Bletsoe (a relative, friend and neighbour of the family) in 40 Eliz. (1597-8), and one from Sir William Russell (i.e. Lord Russell of Thornhaugh) in 1 Jac. (1603-4). It is most natural to suppose that these three 'loans' are in fact a single loan, originally contracted in 1595 from the Countess of Warwick (sister of the late Earl); renewed from her, with a limitation of her share, in 1598; and transferred on her death in 1603-4 into the name of her brother, Lord Russell of Thornhaugh. In 1618 the debt was cleared off, and all records of the bond simultaneously cancelled. Assuming that these three loans were separate and additional to each other, and confusing bonds with loans, Mr Stone has made three further positive assumptions: (1) he states (p. 35) that in 1600 the Earl of Bedford was £40,000 in debt, while (if my interpretation is correct) Mr Stone's evidence shows only one loan in that period, which being bonded at £20,000 probably amounted to about £11,000; (2) he states positively (p. 49) that 'the Dowager Countess of Warwick was so rich that she entered actively into the market as a large-scale moneylender to her decaying fellow-nobles'—elsewhere (p. 52), on the basis of what is obviously another aspect of the same transaction, he calls her 'the queen of aristocratic usurers'—while in fact the only evidence for this statement—directly contrary to her own explicit account,² which Mr Stone therefore dismisses as false—is that she, being a childless widow, could afford to underwrite, with relatives of the family, part of a loan to her own nephew; and (3) having supposed that the bond to Lord

¹ Wm. Cecil, Lord Burghley, was grandfather to the earl's wife; George, Earl of Cumberland, to whom, with Thomas Cecil, Derby gave a bond for £20,000, was his maternal uncle.

² H.M.C. Marquis of Salisbury, ix, 22. If Mr Stone wished to refer to a real 'queen of aristocratic usurers' he might have made some allusion to the Countess of Shrewsbury—'Bess of Hardwick'—a significant figure whom he never even mentions.

Russell of Thornhaugh represented a new advance, he has arbitrarily supplied an occasion for it. 'The £20,000 loan from his cousin Sir William Russell in 1604', he states confidently (p. 49), 'was made to deter him [i.e. the Earl of Bedford] from selling off Woburn and Covent Garden to pay his debts. As Sir William's son later became the fourth Earl, it was money well spent.' The only reference which Mr Stone gives for this positive assertion is to p. 17 of Miss G. Scott Thomson's *Life in a Noble Household*. Miss Scott Thomson in fact makes no such statement; what she does say on that page is that William Russell and his son prevented the Earl from selling these estates—not by advancing money, but by obtaining, as heirs presumptive, an order from the King. Nor does she say that this was in 1604. In fact, Miss Scott Thomson tells me that the petition to the King, concerning which there are five papers at Woburn, is dated 1606. Mr Stone's assertion thus appears to be a pure figment.

These cases of the Earls of Derby and Bedford are relatively simple to follow, because the relationship or identity of successive lenders is clear, and the fact and date of cancellation are recorded in the books. But it should be remembered that these facts, which make these cases relatively simple, are the exception, not the rule. Debts could be cancelled between the parties without leaving any trace of cancellation in the Recognizance Books, and debts could be continued not only by agreement with the original lender, or his heir, but by transfer to another lender. Any attempt to estimate 'total indebtedness', such as is made by Mr Stone in respect of the Essex conspirators (p. 35) or the viscounts and lords (pp. 50-3) or the aristocracy as a whole (p. 38), is clearly most dangerous when so important a factor is uncertain. Incidentally it is not only Mr Stone's method in this matter that excites suspicion; his mathematics require further explanation if they are to seem correct. Thus on p. 35 he states that the indebtedness of the Earl of Southampton when he joined Essex's revolt in February 1601 was roughly £19,000. As evidence for this figure he refers explicitly to four 'debts' on recognizance, tabulated on p. 48. If assumed to be separate, and accordingly added together, these four 'debts' (in fact they are bonds) do indeed amount to £19,000. But even if it is correct to treat them as separate debts, there is still a further objection: for £16,000 worth of these bonds is recorded in Mr Stone's own table as cancelled in 1598-9—i.e. before Essex's revolt. The Earl of Southampton's liabilities in 1601 are thus reduced, as far as this evidence goes, to £3000 worth of bonds, equivalent to about £1750 worth of debts, or less than one-tenth of Mr Stone's estimate.

Further evidence of this type of misunderstanding could be given from the case of almost every peer whose 'total indebtedness' over any period Mr Stone has somewhat rashly attempted to summarize.

(c) Besides confusing bonds with capital *plus* interest, and bonds with loans, and loans carried forward with new loans, Mr Stone seems to me to have misinterpreted individual loans. Borrowers took up loans in partnership, or laid off part of their debts by redistribution. Thus the first four in the list of debts which Mr Stone ascribes to the Earl of Cumberland (p. 47) were not in fact incurred by him alone. The first two were shared between Cumberland, Anthony Wright and William Farrard: the next two (which must anyway be reduced from £2000 to £1150) were shared between Cumberland and Henry Cholmley of Whitby. The nature of these partnerships of course differed: sometimes they were family arrangements; sometimes they were a method by which the lenders distributed the burden; sometimes they were a means whereby the borrower used the credit of his partner to raise a loan. Thus in 31 Eliz. two bonds granted by Lord Thomas

Howard were registered, each of £3000.¹ The first was for a loan taken up by Howard and Thomas Sutton in partnership from a third party; the second was for an equivalent loan from Sutton to Howard. Most probably these were two stages in the same loan, Sutton first associating himself with Howard as a borrower and then transferring the claim of the original lender to himself. Mr Stone, however, by confusing bonds with loans, and ignoring the probable significance of both the partnership and the transfer, has added the bonds together and ascribed the total of £6000 as a debt to Howard, who in fact, if my reasoning is correct, had borrowed about a quarter of that sum. No wonder Mr Stone thus contrives to conclude (p. 53) that Howard's debts between 1589 and 1603 reached 'the truly colossal sum of £70,000'. At no time did Howard owe even half that sum. All that can be deduced from a proper use of the recognizances is that he borrowed heavily during that period, incurring new debts as he paid off the old. Mr Stone states that 'it was not till the beginning of the new reign' that he was 'at last rich enough' to pay off '£20,000 of old debts'. This is untrue. Already before the death of Elizabeth he had redeemed, at different times, at least £24,000 worth of the bonds which, at different times, he had acknowledged.

Further, those who in one capacity are borrowers, often act in another as lenders; indeed they may simply be acting as intermediaries without using their own resources. It is obviously improper, in estimating their financial solvency, to concentrate on the debit side of the balance-sheet, as Mr Stone has done, ignoring the credit side. Mr Stone has gone through the Recognizance Books collecting instances of aristocratic borrowing. Aristocratic lending has only been incidentally noticed by him in cases where one nobleman happened to borrow from another. Even in such cases, he has omitted to adjust the lender's balance-sheet. The possibility that noblemen may occasionally have lent to commoners is ignored.

Further, some of these loans were taken up in the names of third parties in circumstances which are naturally not explained in the official record. Thus in 45 Eliz. (1602-3) Ralph and Edward Sheldon of Beoley, Worcs, gave to Thomas Sutton a bond for £7000, and the record includes the words *capta in rure*. Using Mr Stone's methods we should conclude from this that the Sheldons, in dire financial need, and forced to borrow more than they could repay, forfeited their estates, or part of them, to Sutton. In fact, a knowledge of the circumstances (deducible from the private history of the families concerned) supplies us with a very different explanation. The Sheldons—a rich recusant family whose estates remained intact till the Civil War—were most probably acting as trustees for their kinsman Sir Griffin Markham, who, being in fear of outlawry and confiscation, was at this time regularly using the names of his relatives. If the words *capta in rure* refer to a surrender of land (which is most improbable) they could only refer to the lands not of the Sheldon family, but of Sir John Skinner, on part of whose property Sir Griffin Markham had a transferable claim. Clearly such questions of circumstance vitally affect any conclusions that we may draw from such evidence about the finances of lender and borrower alike. Every entry in the Recognizance Books represents part of a personal history—often a very obscure part of a very complicated history. To isolate such parts and use them as the evidence for dogmatic and far-reaching conclusions is very dangerous.

Further, Mr Stone has assumed that every recognizance is the record of a straightforward transfer of money from a lender to a borrower, and from this assumption has drawn far-reaching inferences about the financial condition of

¹ P.R.O. Recognizances for Debt, L.C. 4/22 (roll).

both parties. But this is by no means a safe or proper assumption. All kinds of transactions, not necessarily loans or even monetary transactions at all, could be secured by bond and masked by a recognizance in the nature of Statute Staple. When the condition of a bond is explicitly recorded as the repayment of a debt, then such a conclusion is of course clear; and when the bond is given to some well-known merchant, goldsmith or moneylender the same conclusion can reasonably be inferred. But these cases are the minority; in the majority of cases the exact nature of the transaction thus represented is mysterious, and perhaps beyond the reach of research or conjecture. We cannot even assume that the bond represents even temporary necessity on the part of the 'borrowers'—for a rich man wishing to buy land might give a bond to guarantee the ultimate payment of the purchase price while the legalities of conveyance were being arranged.¹ Elizabethan lawyers found dozens of uses for such recognizances. Obviously any generalization which presupposes that every bond represents a simple advance of money from a rich lender to a poor borrower is quite unreal, and capable of leading to disastrous error.

All these complexities have been disregarded by Mr Stone, who has treated each bond in isolation as the evidence of a direct and simple loan. The consequence is an impressive but unpalatable series of vast debts and unresolved contradictions. Thus we read (on p. 52) that Thomas Cecil, Lord Burghley, was 'indulging in some very heavy borrowing' at a time when (according to the figures given on pp. 46 and 49) he is recorded as a large-scale lender; we find Lord Lumley prominently advertised as a borrower on p. 50 while unobtrusively admitted as a lender on p. 52; we find the Paulet family rich on p. 12 but, on p. 45, obliged by their poverty² to borrow money from Lord Mountjoy, who, being threatened with 'total ruin' (p. 53), would seem ill-equipped to supply it; we find (on p. 49) that Lady Warwick was enormously rich at a time when the evidence of p. 15 shows her to have been in financial straits; and we find the Earl of Cumberland (on p. 46) allegedly lending £20,000—and thus acquiring exactly the same title as Lady Warwick to be called a 'wealthy aristocratic moneylender'—at a time when (according to p. 47) he was sunk in financial 'ruin'.

III

It thus seems to me that the detail with which Mr Stone has sought to support, and in supporting to accentuate, a familiar conclusion is demonstrably and seriously inaccurate. If I am right, it remains to ask whether this inaccuracy of detail remains a mere question of detail, or whether it has led him to advance or support false historical conclusions. I believe that it has. A single mathematical error may be fatal to an economic argument, and Mr Stone's errors, if my analysis is correct, are multiple. By the various processes of error described above he would appear to have multiplied aristocratic debts by an average factor of four or five and the effective rate of interest on such debts by a factor of at least five or six.

¹ Mr J. P. Cooper has drawn my attention to such an instance.

² Mr Stone has anyway muddled the finances of the Paulet family by confusing the third and fourth marquises of Winchester and by ascribing to the fourth marquis, as debts, bonds amounting to £41,000 which were given not by him but by the dowager marchioness and almost certainly do not represent loans at all. In fact, only one of the debts which Mr Stone ascribes to the fourth marquis is in his name, and it is most probably not a debt at all.

The result, in my opinion, is not an analysis, it is a caricature of Elizabethan England.

Elizabethan society was an acquisitive society. Thanks to low wages and cheap labour on one hand, and new opportunities in land management and foreign trade on the other, large gains could be made (directly and indirectly) from industry and commerce, and fluid capital wealth was both increased and concentrated. It was concentrated particularly in the City of London. Conversely, those who depended on fixed rents (however large) in a falling currency—i.e. the traditional landlord class—could only keep their position in a competitive world by anticipating income or freeing capital. In their difficulty, the victims of the Price Revolution turned naturally to the profiteers of commerce; having sufficient ultimate security they were able to borrow largely; and the money-market thus created enabled some to tide over a period of crisis, others to finance from capital the extravagance they could no longer sustain from income. These conclusions are, I think, admitted. The question is, what was the effect of the debts thus contracted upon the individual fortunes and social history of those who contracted them?

According to Mr Stone it was ruinous. Using statistics inflated (as I submit) by several distinct types of error, he boldly states a figure for the total indebtedness of the whole aristocratic class. Then, by another reckless calculation, he assures us that the Elizabethan noblemen were 'depending upon credit for at least one-quarter of their total annual income'. On the basis of these figures he has no difficulty in asserting that 'the whole structure of Tudor society was on the verge of imminent dissolution' (p. 38). In general, and in detail, his picture of this society is of a society not merely individualist and acquisitive, but desperate, disintegrating, and universally corrupt.

Having reached such conclusions, Mr Stone has not hesitated to re-interpret other facts in their light, and for old actions to supply new motives more in keeping with his philosophy. If debt and corruption were the essential nourishment of the Elizabethan age, then (he supposes) their influence must surely be discoverable in incidents for which less perspicacious historians have previously supposed other motives. Lord Cromwell took part in Essex's rising in 1601. He was tried, and fined £6000. Why, asks Mr Stone (p. 51), was he treated with such leniency? To answer this question he promptly looks in the Recognizances for Debt, and finding that Sir Edward Coke had previously 'lent' Lord Cromwell £10,000 (in fact he had only taken a bond for that sum), he immediately sees light. If Lord Cromwell had been attainted of treason his estate would have been forfeit to the Crown, and then what would have become of the Attorney-General's £10,000? 'Perhaps', says Mr Stone, 'the leniency with which Lord Cromwell was treated was not altogether unconnected with this secret bond between State prosecutor and prisoner at the bar.' In fact, since Lord Cromwell was treated no more leniently than most of his fellow-conspirators, and a good deal less leniently than many of them, Mr Stone's problem does not exist; and since the bond was not secret at all, and

forfeiture for treason anyway did not annul previously contracted obligations,¹ his explanation would not solve it if it did. In fact a little research dissipates the whole fancy. Lord Cromwell's bond is dated 1598; being for £10,000 it would most probably cover an actual financial transfer of about £6000. And sure enough, looking into Coke's investments at this time, we discover that in 1598 he purchased from Lord Cromwell, for £6200, the manor of Elmham in Norfolk.² Clearly the bond covered this sale, which was completed, and the land transferred to Coke, nearly three years before the sentence on Lord Cromwell for which Mr Stone suggests such improper but improbable motives.

Similarly, Mr Stone suggests (p. 37) that one of the objects of the Gunpowder Plot 'was the cancellation of those awkward bonds piling up in the books of the office of the Clerk of Recognizances'. I am at a loss to understand this suggestion. Neither revolution, nor regicide, nor republic, nor restoration led to the cancellation of private debts, so why should a mere assassination? Or does Mr Stone suppose that the records themselves would have been destroyed by the explosion? Even forty barrels of gunpowder under the Parliament House could hardly have damaged records piling up in an office in Shoe Lane.³

Such are the more extravagant applications of Mr Stone's conclusions. Even apart from them, I believe his conclusions to be wrong. They are wrong, in my opinion, because they are based on demonstrably incorrect evidence. They are also historically misleading because they present a 'historical' account which defies historical explanation. The Elizabethan aristocracy portrayed by Mr Stone is a class which could not, economically or politically, have survived—a class not merely in financial difficulties, but composed of ruined and incorrigible parasites. If 'over two-thirds' of the English aristocracy were, in 1600, not merely living above their means but 'poised on the brink of financial ruin' (p. 40), how are we to explain the fact that they not merely recovered from this imminent ruin, but survived the far greater crisis of the next sixty years? Their extravagance did not diminish in those years, there is even evidence that it increased;⁴

¹ See G. Jacob, *Law Dictionary* (ed. T. E. Tomlins, 1797), s.v. 'Forfeiture'.

² C. W. James, *Chief Justice Coke, his Family and Descendants* (1929), p. 305.

³ That the office of the Clerk of Recognizances was in Shoe Lane is shown by a MS. in the Smyth of Nibley Papers in Gloucester Public Library (vol. III, p. 13), kindly communicated to me by Mr J. P. Cooper.

⁴ Mr Stone dwells (pp. 6–7) on the ruinous feasts of the Elizabethan aristocracy. Clarendon (*History of the Rebellion*, ed. 1843, p. 32) says of the reign of Charles I that 'the highest excess of feasting was then introduced, or at least carried to a height it had never been before; and from whence it hardly declined afterwards, to the great damage and mischief of the nation in their estates and manners'. Although far greater figures are vaguely reported, those Elizabethan feasts which, according to Mr Stone, are 'subject to statistical check' cost from £362 to £700. Archbishop Laud's feast at Oxford in 1636 cost, according to his own steward's accounts, £2266. 1s. 7d. The increasing pace of social and economic competition under James I is clearly shown by the letters of John Chamberlain. Further, the evidence of the dramatists, so often used to illustrate the extravagance of the time, is relevant (if at all) to the Jacobean, not to the Elizabethan age.

and yet they survived war finance, huge composition fines, expropriation, and the suspension of that political privilege on which, after all, economic privilege largely depends. It was not till after 1660 that the turn of the economic tide brought them into their Promised Land. How did they do it?

Mr Stone does indeed offer an explanation. King James, he suggests, by his personal policy, aided by the economic charms of aldermen's daughters, 'abruptly arrested the landslide'. Now I believe that these factors did have some effect—though it should be remarked that King James, by making peace with Spain and stopping the alienation of episcopal land, also ended certain traditional aristocratic compensations—but I do not believe that even an open-handed monarch like King James, with the limited resources of the English Crown, could arrest—in mid-course—a landslide of the character described by Mr Stone, or that even a few aldermen's daughters could transform the colossal debts (up to £105,000) which Mr Stone ascribes to their husbands into assets capable of outlasting sixty years of extravagance, attrition and revolution. Even Diocletian could not arrest economic change by an imperial edict; far less King James.

Nevertheless, the English aristocracy, as a class, did survive. There were casualties, of course, and new additions, but there was no impending 'day of liquidation' such as Mr Stone regularly assumes (pp. 37, 41).¹ Howards and Stanleys, Cecils and Russells, Somersets and Seymours, Talbots and Mannors, Sackvilles and Sidneys, Dudleys and Nevilles, Berkeleys and Paulets and many others weathered the worst of the storm and prospered after it. How did they do it? It seems to me that neither King James nor the aldermen's daughters were the real reason. They survived (I would submit) partly because their predicament, though genuine, was nothing like so serious as Mr Stone, with his swollen figures, supposes; partly because whatever debts they incurred, and whatever a single extremist like the Earl of Oxford might do, in general they clung as long as they possibly could to as much as they possibly could of their lands. Land remained the greatest and steadiest source of income, and the safest long-term investment. Land enabled many a financially embarrassed peer to recover from his embarrassment: he had only to cut down his expenses on 'conspicuous waste' for a time, and the rents of his land would restore him to solvency. After all, they were not fixed for ever: even the longest leases would fall in, and could be adjusted. Thus the ninth earl of Northumberland, when faced by the consequences of his own reckless expenditure, was able, by prudent economy, to recover affluence in a few years; and many a noble family (like the Cavendishes, Earls of Devonshire in the early seventeenth century) recovered affluence through a timely minority—for the exactions of the Court of Wards fell heaviest not, as Mr Stone says (p. 27), on 'the great', but, as the Earl of Northumberland (who had reason to know) clearly stated, on the gentry.² Moreover, the value of

¹ According to Mr Stone, the Cecils and Howards, by 'an orgy of aristocratic cannibalism', contrived to postpone this inevitable day. They have certainly postponed it a long time.

² *Correspondence of James VI of Scotland* (Camden Soc. 1860), p. 59.

land was steadily rising; and it is this rise in value, especially after 1600 (to which all estate accounts bear witness), that seems to me to have done more than King James did, or any king could do, to sustain the fortunes of those noblemen who had the common sense to meet extraordinary calls upon their resources, in an extraordinary period of financial restriction, by borrowing on bond in the hope of ultimately repaying from income, not by selling their land.

Mr Stone, of course, denies this. According to him 'the majority' of the peerage 'were forced to adopt the heroic remedy for their necessities of the direct sale of land' (p. 19). 'Some of the sales of the aristocracy', he assures us, 'were on a huge scale.' But what is the evidence for these categorical assertions? Mr Stone presents what seems at first an impressive list. 'By 1583 Sir Henry Sidney declared that he had left "not so much ground as will feed a mutton".' How then, we ask, do the Sidneys still own Penshurst and Robertsbridge? The answer is simple: Mr Stone has misquoted a document. What Sir Henry said in 1583 was not that he had no land *left*—i.e. that he had sold it all—but that he had *received* no additional land from Queen Elizabeth in reward for his services; which, of course, is a very different matter.¹ 'The Earl of Northumberland', continues Mr Stone, 'liquidated all his property in Kent'; but what are these Kentish properties of the Percy family? The Percy lands were great estates in Northumberland and Yorkshire and the manor of Petworth in Sussex, and these remained intact throughout the period. Mr Stone's statement being mysterious and his references inadequate, we investigate the matter and find that the family had indeed held some property in Kent, and this had indeed been sold—but by the sixth earl in the reign of Henry VIII,² which Mr Stone (p. 2) calls 'the acquisitive period of the Tudor aristocracy'. 'The Marquis of Winchester', continues Mr Stone, 'sold up the Paulet property in Devon and Cornwall.' This is most misleading. What the marquis proposed to sell—it is not clear whether he in fact sold it—was merely 'a parcel' of certain inconveniently remote Willoughby de Broke lands now descended to him, through his grandmother, in coparcenery with Lord Mountjoy.³ To the Earl of Southampton Mr Stone is even more ruthless. Having already multiplied his debts by a factor of at least eleven in order to make him appear sufficiently ruined, he now states (p. 35) that by 1601 he 'had sold all his lands'. 'All his lands'? But what were the principal Wriothesley estates? The manor of Titchfield and other property in Hampshire, the manor of Bloomsbury and Southampton House in London—these, inherited from his father, all passed undiminished to his son. How then can Mr Stone write that he had 'sold all his lands'? Once again we pursue his references⁴ and find only a letter from Southampton's

¹ S.P. Dom. (Eliz.), 12/159/1.

² Collins, *Peerage* (1779), II, 395.

³ H.M.C. Marquis of Salisbury, XI, 410, 447, 494, 584. Certain of the Willoughby lands in Devon still belonged to the Paulet family in the eighteenth century (Lysons, *Magna Britannia* (1806–22), VI, ii, 269, 421; cf. Westcote, *View of Devonshire* (ed. 1845), p. 405).

⁴ H.M.C. Marquis of Salisbury, XI, 71.

mother stating (*inter alia*) that her son had recently sold some unspecified land. This is what Mr Stone has transmuted into 'all his land'. Then there is Lord Willoughby of Eresby, the famous Elizabethan commander. According to Mr Stone (p. 50) he was as ruined by keeping out of the court as other peers were by getting into it. Consequently 'he sold up much of his estates to pay his debts of £9300', thereby reducing his income to £900 p.a. and leaving his son insolvent. But apart from miscalculating the debts and misquoting the documents and inextricably confusing Peregrine Bertie, Lord Willoughby of Eresby, with his second cousin, Charles Willoughby, Lord Willoughby of Parham, Mr Stone has here assumed the sale of land from no other evidence than 'the ominous words *capta in rure*' in the margin of the record. These words, as I have shown, can hardly bear such a meaning. In fact Lord Willoughby of Eresby had an income of £2200-£2300 p.a. He mortgaged his lands but did not sell them.¹ Another peer who, according to Mr Stone, had sold 'all his lands' by 1602 was Lord Zouche (p. 50). Once again Mr Stone's references are found, on examination, unequal to such a conclusion. In fact, Lord Zouche, though in some straits for ready money, retained inherited lands into the reign of James I,² when he added to them by buying Bramshill in Hampshire, and building there his stately Jacobean mansion. As for the Earl of Cumberland, having stated that his 'piracy' (in fact it was privateering, which is very different) cost him £100,000, while omitting to mention the profits which it brought in, Mr Stone describes him as 'dissipating his fortune', 'overwhelmed with debt', reduced to 'ruin', and at last, his situation being 'really desperate', 'selling off his property to his tenants, on a large scale' (pp. 9, 17, 47). The finances of the Earl of Cumberland were indeed entangled, but since he left estates sufficient to endow two rich and noble dynasties in the north,³ Mr Stone's statements naturally surprise us, and once again we consult his sources. What do we find? In 1602 the Earl is indeed bothered by some tiresome debts and pays a visit to his estates to settle them. He doubts not, he assures Cecil, that 'a small time will clear these mischiefs'. A month later he reports that he is making such good bargains with his reluctant tenants as 'I hope will effect the purpose I came down for, and clear my debts'. In other words, he is raising rents. In another letter he confidently hopes that 'this country business... will make me a free man—though with some sale of land'.⁴ This is the evidence on which Mr Stone bases his account of ruin, real despair, and 'large-scale' sale of land.

¹ See Lady Georgina Bertie, *Five Generations of a Loyal House* (1845), p. 527.

² E.g. Brayfield in Northants (Bridges, *Northamptonshire* (1791), II, 379).

³ The Cumberland estates passed entire to the Earl's daughter, Lady Anne Clifford, and through her to the Dukes of Devonshire and Lord Hothfield. They were encumbered, but not sold, being entailed (G. C. Williamson, *George, Third Earl of Cumberland* (1920), pp. 272-5). Mr Stone is wrong in describing T. D. Whitaker as 'the only scholar to have examined the family archives' (p. 47). Mr Williamson has made good use of them.

⁴ H.M.C. Marquis of Salisbury, XII, 227, 321, 574.

Thus Mr Stone's 'huge' sales of land by 'the majority' of the Elizabethan peerage shrink, on scrutiny, to a few trivial and unspecified examples, and he even feels himself obliged to include unfulfilled intentions of sale as evidence of the fact (p. 20). Several peers undoubtedly did sell, and rising gentry thrived on their discarded manors; but the reverse process also occurred. The Countess of Shrewsbury bought up the lands of midland gentry¹ and endowed three dukedoms with her accumulated gains. Lord William Howard often borrowed money on recognizance, from Thomas Sutton and others, for the cost of securing his wife's estate in the north was heavy; but he too was a buyer, not a seller, of land. It was the gentry who were the sellers. In Cumberland he bought Thornthwaite from Sir Henry Curwen, Corby from the Salkelds, the tithes of Brampton from Sir Thomas Dacre, and in County Durham the manor of Tursdale from the Bulmers and the lordship of Wheatley Hill from Sir Thomas Riddell. He restored his castle of Naworth, improved his domain, enclosed and cultivated waste land, raised his own stock, planted timber and worked coal. His estate was worth £1042 p.a. in 1595, £3884 p.a. in 1611, £6144 p.a. in 1633.² Once again it is improper to quote only the debit side of the balance-sheet, even if it were quoted correctly.

What was the net result of such sales? Did the aristocracy lose or gain in the extent of their lands? Most probably they lost. Prof. Tawney has calculated³ that, in a sample area of 3300 manors in ten counties, between 1561 and 1640, the aristocracy lost 47.1 % of their property (measured by extent), while the gentry increased theirs by 17.8 %. But even these figures seem to me somewhat artificial, for by deliberately excluding many newly-ennobled families from his calculation of the peerage, while presumably not excluding new families among the gentry, Prof. Tawney has compared a static, perhaps diminishing, group of noble families with a social class that was being continually refreshed.⁴ If he had compared the old aristocracy exclusively with the old gentry, or the gentry, as recruited by new members, with the aristocracy similarly recruited, I suspect that the discrepancy would have proved far less. For the older gentry, on their smaller scale, were in the same predicament as the older aristocracy; many of them too were alienating land;⁵ and if, as a class, the

¹ I owe this information to Mr A. L. Rowse, who has worked through her papers at Hardwick.

² Ornsby, *Household Books of Lord William Howard of Naworth Castle* (Surtees Soc. 1877), pp. xxxvi ff.

³ R. H. Tawney, 'The Rise of the Gentry', *Econ. Hist. Rev.* (1941), xi, 35-6.

⁴ Prof. Tawney tells me that he in fact excluded not *all* those peers, created since 1561, who may have held or acquired lands in the sample area, but only those who, in 1561, had held the status of gentry in the same area. Nevertheless, the latter were presumably the great majority; and since Prof. Tawney has not only subtracted them from the peerage but also credited them to the gentry, he would appear to have given the gentry the advantage in every reckoning.

⁵ Although I have never seen it adequately systematized, the evidence for this statement can be found in many county and family histories. Among the gentry of Lincolnshire, for instance, 'hardly a family maintained its position in the county beyond the middle of the seventeenth century, unless it had by marriage or trade

gentry nevertheless rose relatively to the nobility, the explanation would seem to be simple enough: its new economic energy was brought to it largely by merchants and yeomen, and since such men had to become gentry before they could become peers, the casualties among the gentry were more rapidly repaired. This was especially so under Elizabeth, who could not prevent merchants and yeomen from buying their way into the gentry, but who could, and did, prevent all but a handful of commoners from becoming peers.¹ The over-simplified assumption that the nobility, as a class, were in decline while the gentry, as a class, were rising should perhaps be restated: perhaps both classes were being transformed, at an unequal rate.

But even if the actual acreage of land held by the aristocracy was being diminished in this period, did this necessarily entail a diminution of revenue? In the 1650's many desperate men, who had invested heavily in confiscated lands, sought to prevent the revival of the House of Lords which might implicitly invalidate their titles or, by leading to a royal restoration, suddenly reverse them. Such men—like Captain Baynes, the great land-speculator of the Army—clutched at the fashionable doctrines of Harrington's *Oceana* and argued that the old nobility, by their economic decline, being no longer a 'balance', had lost their right to political power.² But such statements are tainted alike by their origin and their date: they are polemical slogans, and such truth as they may incidentally contain refers clearly to the previous decade of confiscation and composition rather than to the whole preceding century. They are quite irrelevant to the condition of the Elizabethan aristocracy. In fact, even if the Elizabethan aristocracy did suffer in the extent of its lands (although primogeniture, marriage and entail would repair much of the damage), this is no reason

added to its income' (V.C.H. Lincs, II, 324). In Leicestershire 'the spectacular rise of the yeomen' after 1540 was largely at the expense of the older gentry (see W. G. Hoskins, 'The Leicestershire Farmer in the Sixteenth Century', in *Transactions of the Leics. Archaeological Soc.* xxii, pp. 59 ff.). In general, 'the decline of the gentry' seems to me as obvious a phenomenon in this period—and as necessary to the understanding of it—as that immigration into the gentry of yeomen and merchants whose consequences Prof. Tawney has entitled 'the rise of the gentry': a title which his less critical disciples have converted into a dogma misleading to many.

¹ In the first fourteen years of her reign, Queen Elizabeth created seven English peers (Lord Hunsdon, Lord St John of Bletsoe, Viscount Bindon, the Earl of Leicester, Lord Buckhurst, Lord Burghley and Lord Norris of Rycote). She also restored the attainted Marquis of Northampton and the heirs of two other attainted peers (the Earls of Hertford and Warwick) and promoted two peers within the peerage (the Earls of Essex and Lincoln). Thereafter (it was after the aristocratic conspiracies of 1569–72) her parsimony of peerages was heroic. Except for two members of the Howard family, both honoured in 1597 (Lord Thomas Howard, created Lord Howard de Walden, and Lord Howard of Effingham, promoted to the earldom of Nottingham), she neither created nor promoted, in a space of thirty-one years, a single peer. In these years abeyance, extinction and attainder absolutely diminished the peerage.

² The debates are in Burton, *Parliamentary Diary* (1828), II, 22, 299, 408; III, 31, 146–8, 525; cf. Ludlow, *Memoirs* (ed. Firth, 1894), II, 59.

to assume a proportionate decline in value. Lord Berkeley may have sold a large part of his estates, but good management was to provide his descendants with a vastly increased revenue from the remainder; and the disposal of scattered and distant properties in order to concentrate on the improvement of a compact estate is regarded by any rational landlord not as waste but as improvement.

If the value of agricultural land increased out of proportion to its extent after 1600, the rise in the value of urban property was even greater. This was the age of sudden urban development in London. Mr Stone mentions the 'fantastic' rise in city rentals, which, he says (p. 8) was an additional charge on aristocratic purses. But the aristocracy were, in general, a rent-receiving, not a rent-paying class, and such 'fantastic' increases often represented to them not loss but profit. The Earl of Lincoln owned several houses in the fashionable residential street, Cannon Row, Westminster.¹ The same Lord Rich whom Mr Stone, on the evidence of a few borrowings (anyway exaggerated) dismisses as impoverished (p. 52), made a fortune out of the development of St Bartholomew's, Smithfield: so far was he from poverty that by 1618, when he was created Earl of Warwick, he was nicknamed 'Cornucopia' for his plenty.² The Earls of Bedford and Salisbury developed their London property. So did the Earls of Leicester and Southampton, both of whom, according to Mr Stone, were ruined and landless³ (has Mr Stone ever heard of Leicester Square or Southampton Row?). If some of them financed such improvements by borrowing on bond or even disposing of outlying rural property, that must not necessarily be regarded as evidence of financial 'ruin'. In fact, only one Elizabethan peer was literally sold up: the Earl of Oxford; but it is absurd to generalize about a whole class from one notorious eccentric.⁴

If Mr Stone is wrong about direct sales, he seems to me just as wrong about indirect sale or mortgage. 'By far the most widely practised type of loan', he says, with his usual confidence, 'was upon mortgage of lands' (p. 23). He gives no evidence at all for this categorical statement, and

¹ Mr Stone's statements about the Earl of Lincoln's finances (p. 49) are a travesty of the sources he cites, as anyone can see who cares to check them. His statement that the first earl ran up 'a host of small debts with tradesmen all over London' rests on the chance survival of two tradesmen's bills for cloth and saddlery, and evidence that the earl's steward bought livestock for him at Smithfield with ready money. I suspect that other earls have occasionally received tailors' bills without therefore being regarded as impoverished.

² E. A. Webb, *Records of St Bartholomew's, Smithfield* (1921), I, 263; McClure, *Letters of John Chamberlain* (1939), II, 163.

³ The Sidneys, Earls of Leicester, inherited the Sidney and Dudley property. Since Mr Stone declares Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, to have died totally ruined, and Sir Henry Sidney to have sold all his land, I presume I have not unfairly drawn the consequences.

⁴ Edward Lord Cromwell sold all his property in England—which was small—between 1596 and 1606; and this was undoubtedly due to poverty. But he was not sold up. He bought the barony of Lecale in Ireland, and settled there permanently with his family. His son became Viscount Lecale and Earl of Ardglass. Properly speaking this is therefore a migration, not a liquidation.

I suspect it to be incorrect. Although it is impossible to be certain, since similar legal forms conceal a great variety of economic practice, it seems to me that borrowing on bond was—at least at this time¹—the commonest method; that mortgages were a desperate expedient; and that foreclosure on mortgage was resisted to the last moment, and its effects afterwards reversed whenever possible. Thomas Sutton had the reputation of being ‘much upon mortgages’² and was eager to invest in land; but in fact most of his lending was on bond, and in the thirty years during which he was, as Mr Stone says, ‘the greatest bloodsucker of the aristocracy’—that is, the greatest professional moneylender—only eight out of his hundreds of clients alienated land to him. By the time of his death this land (which he had considerably improved) was bringing him £3218 a year, while he had over £40,000 out on bond. Further, when any ordinary nobleman had alienated an estate on mortgage, it was the first thing that he sought to recover when the economic wind took a more favourable turn. Lord Thomas Howard twice surrendered the manor of Berden to Sutton in his need, and twice, on a temporary recovery of solvency, bought it back; and as soon as Lord Compton achieved his great windfall, he attempted (though in vain) to buy back the Wiltshire estates which he had alienated to Sutton in his necessity. I give these instances from the operations of Sutton, simply because his practice is most familiar to me; I doubt if he was exceptional.

Thus, in spite of Mr Stone, the Elizabethan aristocracy, in general, retained their lands, and these lands, reduced perhaps in compass but often correspondingly improved in value, were for their descendants the basis of long-continued wealth and power. Ironically, since it was this reluctance to part with their lands which obliged landlords to apply to the money-lenders for ready cash, it may even be said that the evidence of such application, if kept within limits, is evidence of economic health, not of economic weakness, and that the very documents which Mr Stone uses to argue aristocratic ‘ruin’ in fact demonstrate aristocratic common sense. Prudent landlords, needing ready money before their rents had reached them, naturally used that method of raising it which least disturbed the source of their revenue; it was the imprudent, like the Earl of Oxford, who, by selling their lands and spending capital as income, kept their names out of the Recognizance Books. But this obvious point escapes Mr Stone, who quaintly regards those peers who borrowed on recognizance as impoverished (although they could never have done so without adequate security), and carefully excepts as ‘the only five affluent members of the higher aristocracy’ certain arbitrarily selected peers whose names he cannot find in the Recognizances for Debt. And who are these few and fortunate exceptions? The Earl of Pembroke? The name of this incontestably opulent peer is unaccountably absent from Mr Stone’s list of ‘every marquis and

¹ Aubrey, *Brief Lives: Thomas Sutton*.

² Evidence offered to me by Mr J. P. Cooper suggests that borrowing on bond was commonest under Elizabeth, borrowing on mortgage after 1600; but I hesitate to make any general statement.

earl' whose 'economic condition' he has undertaken to expound.¹ The Earls of Bedford and Worcester? These rich magnates² borrowed money, so they are written off as impoverished. Mr Stone's 'affluent' earls include not these, but Ambrose Dudley, Earl of Warwick, whose letters and will³ show him continually troubled by the size of his debts, and the Earls of Kent and Bath—two poor and inconspicuous country noblemen, almost unknown to history, whom fortune had placed rather outside the orbit, perhaps even beneath the notice, than above the reach of the London moneylenders.⁴

With this last paradox we can dismiss Mr Stone's 'Anatomy'. I do not think that it has furthered the understanding of Elizabethan England: such drastic simplifications seldom do. It seems to me to rest on imperfect technical methods. In a recent article Mr Stone has stated his attitude towards sixteenth-century statistics with alarming clarity. 'The accounts', he says (writing of an Elizabethan coal-mine), 'are kept in a form that was convenient for its own purpose, though not very satisfactory to the twentieth-century statistician, who is obliged to break down the figures and reconstruct them again on more rational principles.'⁵ His application of these 'more rational principles' to the Elizabethan Recognizances for Debt has not, in my opinion, been a success. It has supplied him with a basis of demonstrably inaccurate figures, in whose support he has felt obliged to misquote literary sources. Having thus presented an exaggerated historical problem he has proceeded to solve it by an unpalatable answer. His picture of a social landslide suddenly arrested and reversed by the *fiat* of King James would no doubt have pleased that monarch, with his high notions of the miraculous powers of kings. It can hardly satisfy anyone else.

Christ Church, Oxford

¹ Mr Stone has also omitted a number of peers from his list of the viscounts and barons: e.g. Viscount Bindon, Lord Buckhurst, Lord Darcy of Aston, Viscount Montagu, Lord Norris of Rycote, Lord North, Lord Ogle (in abeyance from 1597), Lord Scrope of Bolton, Lord Stourton, Lord Wentworth, Lord Wharton, and (except in so far as he has confused his finances with those of Lord Willoughby of Eresby) Lord Willoughby of Parham.

² For the revenues of the 'impoverished' Earl of Bedford see A. L. Rowse, *The England of Elizabeth* (1950), p. 79; for the Earl of Worcester see above, p. 280.

³ H.M.C. Marquis of Salisbury, I, 488, 493; Collins, *Sidney Papers* (1746), I, 40.

⁴ From 1523 until 1572, when Queen Elizabeth commanded them to resume it, the family of Grey, Earls of Kent, had even renounced the use of their title 'by reason of their slender estate'. See G.E.C., *Complete Peerage*, s.v. 'Kent'.

⁵ *Econ. Hist. Rev.* (1950), 2nd S., III, 97.

THE TRAMPING ARTISAN

By E. J. HOBSBAWM

I

THE story of nineteenth-century labour is one of movement and migration. This article deals with one part of it, the so-called 'tramping system' among organized, and generally apprenticed, workers. The system is now so much a thing of the past that few vestiges of it remain in trade-union rules and constitutions, generally so tenacious of the traditions. Yet there was a time when hardly any trade society which provided its members with benefits failed to adopt it; except in occupations localized in single areas.

The general workings of the system are familiar enough—there are good descriptions of it in Henry Broadhurst's autobiography, Kiddier's *The Old Trade Unions*, and elsewhere.¹ The man who wished to leave town to look for work elsewhere, received a 'blank' or 'clearance' or 'document' showing him to be a member in good standing of the society. This he presented to the local secretary or relieving officer in the 'lodge house' or 'club house' or 'house of call' of the strange town—generally a pub—receiving in return supper, lodging, perhaps beer, and a tramp allowance. If there was work to be found, he took it; the 'call-book' (if there was one) was of course kept at the house of call, an unofficial local labour exchange. If there was none, he tramped on. Should he not get permanent enough work to transfer to a new union branch, the traveller would in due course return to his home town, having made the round of all the branches: among the compositors this grand tour was about 2800 miles long in the 1850's,² among the brushmakers over 1200 miles in the 1820's.³ The methods of paying tramp relief varied. It could be paid by day or distance, in which case cautious head offices took care to make sure that the tramp went from branch to branch by the shortest route, sometimes furnishing route cards. Relief for the weekend was generally higher than for weekdays.

Payments were either (in the early stages of the system) entirely in the hands of branches, which, from time to time, cleared their expenditure with one another, directly, or through head-office;⁴ later it became increasingly centralized. Later also a cheque system was sometimes used. The tramp

¹ Henry Broadhurst, *The Story of His Life Told by Himself* (1901), pp. 21-4; W. Kiddier, op. cit., chap. 1; see also S. and B. Webb, *History of Trade Unionism* (1st ed.), pp. 438-9; W. Beveridge, *Unemployment* (1930 ed.), pp. 241 ff.

² 'Typographical Reminiscences' by an old 'Typo', *Typographical Circular*, June 1891, p. 8.

³ W. Kiddier, op. cit. pp. 16-17.

⁴ E.g. *Bye Laws of Operative Carpenters and Joiners Society of Birmingham* (est. May 1833), IV; probably part of the Operative Builders Union (Birmingham Public Library 239882).

would, on setting out, get a cheque-book valid for so many days—ninety-eight among the masons, less among the bakers¹—and would cash relief cheques in each branch. Such centralization helped to guard against the bane of the system, its abuse by tramps not entitled to relief at all, or by men who had exhausted their annual maximum of tramping money. The exceptionally full statistics, on which much of this article is based, had the same object. The local secretary had to be able to check the bona fides of claimants—for even the forging of tramp tickets was not unknown, especially among the printers, some of whom travelled with ‘documents’ issued by entirely mythical branches until apprehended by the watchful brethren. Monthly circulars, therefore, contained lists of men on the road and similar information. Not that tramp relief was on a lavish scale; among the masons it was 6*d.* a day until late in the century.² Hence relief was fairly regularly supplemented by passing the hat round among fellow-members and their mates on any job the tramp encountered in his travels. Still, the system worked. Indeed, among many unions it was for long the only method of unemployment relief; in some of the building trades as late as the twentieth century.

II

We know extremely little about the early history of the system—it was so called by at least one union³—though its similarity to the continental custom of travel among journeymen has often been noted.⁴ In fact, research has not fundamentally altered the picture sketched by the Webbs in 1894, a tribute to those extraordinary scholars. Among the Devon woolcombers organized tramping existed as early as 1700, spreading to cognate trades between 1700 and 1726.⁵ The Taunton weavers appear to have had a rudimentary tramping arrangement in 1707,⁶ though weaving, as distinct from combing, remained organized on a purely local basis.⁷ The curriers had a tramping federation by the middle of the century, the hatters in the 1770’s.⁸ Tramping arrangements among calico-printers, paper-makers and compositors were so well advanced at the turn of the century, that they must have flourished for quite a while before then. Certainly by the early nineteenth century the evidence accumulates.

¹ Operative Stonemasons, Rules, 1871 and after; Operative Bakers, Rules, 1873.

² Systems of paying relief per mile travelled mitigated the hardship of such flat rates.

³ Friendly Society of Operative House Carpenters and Joiners, 1836 Rules. (This is better known as the General Union of Carpenters and Joiners, now part of the Amalgamated Society of Woodworkers.)

⁴ S. and B. Webb, *op. cit.* p. 24; W. J. Ashley, *Surveys, Historic and Economic*, pp. 249–62.

⁵ Hoskins, *Industry, Trade and People in Exeter, 1688–1800* (Exeter, 1935), pp. 58–61.

⁶ Lipson, *Economic History of England*, III, p. 393.

⁷ *A Short Essay Upon Trade in General by a Lover of his Country and the Constitution* (1741), pp. 40–1 (British Museum).

⁸ S. and B. Webb, *op. cit.* pp. 32, 48.

'Blanks' are recorded among cordwainers in 1803, tramp relief among Preston carpenters in 1808.¹ Calico-printers report titanic journeys in search of work of 1000 and 1400 miles.² By the time of the Select Committee on the Combination Acts, Dublin crafts had tramping arrangements with English ones;³ Francis Place found houses of call in London among hatters, smiths, carpenters, boot- and shoemakers, metal-workers, bakers, tailors, plumbers, painters and glaziers, bookbinders and others,⁴ and the tramping system among many old-established crafts could be taken for granted.⁵

Though Ashley did not think so, the problem of the origin of the system is important. Plainly tramping was a central institution of several old unions, and it is difficult to see how some of the federations of trade clubs which so frightened the authorities after 1792 could have come about without it. Was it the expression of the artisan's new-found mobility, as has been suggested,⁶ or did it spring from an old and living tradition of journeyman travel? How did it spread?

At first sight the 'modern' evidence seems the strongest. So far as we know there is no record of customs and institutions like the continental *tour de France* or *Wanderpflicht* here. British tramping systems seem, from the start, not part of the final polish in the craftsman's education, but devices for meeting seasonal or irregular unemployment; this was the case among the woolcombers, west-country weavers and hatters. (No doubt they were also used quite early as a means of giving strike relief, safeguarding against victimization, etc., important later functions.) Moreover, organized tramping in the eighteenth century seems to have been confined to a few trades.⁷ The tailors had elaborate houses of call in London and Dublin as early as the 1720's, in Birmingham before the 1770's, in Edinburgh by the 1780's at least;⁸ but they did not adopt tramping until sometime before the 1860's, perhaps during or after the collapse of the tight closed shops in the towns in the 1820's and 1830's.⁹ There is no doubt that after, say, 1790

¹ Aspinall, *The Early English Trade Unions* (London, 1949), pp. 76 ff.; Postgate, *The Builders' History* (London, 1923), p. 25.

² *The Memorial of the Journeymen Calico Printers and others connected with their Trade* (London, 1804), pp. 12-13 (Goldsmith's Library).

³ *Select Committee on Artisans and Machinery* (1824), pp. 295-6.

⁴ Graham Wallas, *Life of Francis Place* (London, 1898), p. 211.

⁵ S. and B. Webb, op. cit. pp. 68-9. J. Dunlop, *Drinking Usages of the United Kingdom* (1844 ed., pp. 128, 132, 168), also reports it among tailors and skinners, and implies it among glass-makers, jewellers, wood-turners and 28 metal crafts of the Birmingham type.

⁶ Unwin, *Industrial Organisation in the 16th and 17th Centuries*, p. 227; Clapham, *Concise Economic History of Britain*, p. 261.

⁷ *The Book of English Trades* (1808) mentions it only among hatters and woolcombers; but this is obviously unreliable (1823 ed., p. 441).

⁸ F. Galton, *Select Documents*. . . *The Tailoring Trade* (London, 1896), p. 3, for London; *A Satirical Poem on the Society of Journeymen Tailors* (B.M. 1890 e 5 (169)) for Dublin, n.d., but probably 1726; for Edinburgh, D. M. Moir's *Life of Mansie Wauch, Tailor in Dalkeith* (Edinburgh, 1828), p. 44.

⁹ F. Galton, op. cit. LXXXI and *passim*.

the system was adopted by previously non-tramping trades and perfected by tramping ones. Though masons must have tramped, we have no record of the practice among other builders before the nineteenth century. The hatters did not adopt the 'blank' until 1798,¹ though they had houses of call in the 1730's² and some sort of tramping federation in the 1770's. Perhaps they used an intermediate form of the system, such as we find among calico-printers, in which tramps were officially authorized to make local collections among their mates.³

Nor is it wholly impossible that the system may have been invented in one place—the West Country seems most likely—and was then spread by travelling woollen workers, or perhaps tramping masons from the western quarries. The institutions and rituals of later trade unions are generally held to owe a great deal to those of the woollen workers, and 'blanks' may be part of the debt.⁴

On the other hand, there are archaisms in the old tramp systems which point to the memory, at any rate, of older customs. Thus they were, and remained, entirely adapted to single men. I have come across no case in which provision was made for the wife and family of the tramping journeyman; indeed, one of the earliest complaints against the weavers was that they left their families on the rates while they tramped.⁵ Had they been originally designed to meet unemployment they could hardly have failed to bear the married workman in mind. Then again, they were in the strict sense of the word tramping systems. The Boilermakers, who provided for travel by land 'or sailed by water or by means of steam power' as early as the 1830's⁶ are, I think, unique. The Steam-Engine Makers did not provide for travel by coasting vessel until the 1840's⁷ and the compositors only amended 'tramped' to 'travelled' in 1872.⁸ Certainly, as late as the 1850's and 1860's there was a strong prejudice among masons against any mode of travel other than Shanks's pony, the only 'provident' one. It is not clear whether this was old, or merely a rationalization, in the light of Victorian morality, of an older custom.⁹ A system designed to send men from slack to busy areas might have considered the most expeditious means of travel,

¹ Place Papers (B.M. Add. MSS. 27799, 77). The Place Papers oddly enough contain very little information about tramping.

² M. D. George, *London Life in the 18th Century*, p. 293.

³ S. and B. Webb, *op. cit.* p. 24, n.

⁴ *Ibid.* p. 111, n. Certainly the only real sign of antiquity is among the woolcombers, who had 'a spare bench...always provided in the shop upon which people on the *tramp* may rest themselves' (*Book of English Trades*, loc. cit.).

⁵ Lipson, *op. cit.* p. 393.

⁶ D. C. Cummings, *History of the United Society of Boilermakers and Iron and Steel Shipbuilders* (Newcastle, 1905), p. 31.

⁷ Steam-Engine Makers, 1846, revised Rules.

⁸ *Report of Proceedings of the Meeting of Delegates from the Provincial Typographical Association* (Manchester, 1873), p. 15. The General Union of Carpenters specifically barred travel by coach or water, except across the Channel, for which 3s. 6d. was allowed (1836 Rules).

⁹ Henry Broadhurst, *op. cit.* p. 13.

for instance the much-used coasting vessel.¹ How much weight we can attach to the nineteenth-century evidence of a belief that 'no man knows his own ability or what he is worth until he has worked in more towns than one',² is uncertain. Our ignorance of the customs and traditions of earlier wage-earners is profound since they were almost unrecorded, so the prevalence of such beliefs is quite possible.³

Certainly, in some cases, organized tramping merely systematized older habits. 'It will be nessarey for tramps coming this road to bring their clearances with them. You will likewise demand clearances from aney that may come from here [*sic*]'—say the Portsmouth and similarly the Bath cordwainers, announcing the foundation of a local union in 1803.⁴ The Birmingham carpenters founded a society in 1808 primarily to appoint a house for 'the reception of workmen travelling for the purpose of getting employment and who are commonly called TRAMPS'.⁵ The Bolton iron-founders, in 1809, assume the existence of an unofficial network of such stations, for they are confident, on founding their local union, that the expenses of foreign tramps will be 'reimbursed to this Society by the Society to which the member so relieved [with 'supper, one pint of beer, one night's lodging and two shillings in cash to carry him to the next town'] shall belong'.⁶ Clearly the practice of tramping was not in itself new. Indeed, the view that the tramping systems were designed to secure mobility begs the question. What the early unions wanted, was not mobility as such, but financially secure mobility, or its control in the interest of a local closed shop. 'None of *their* members', the cordwainers argued about hatters and curriers, 'are suffered to wander like vagrants out of employment'.⁷ That they should wander at all was taken for granted.

There was no reason why they should not. The Settlement Laws hardly incommoded the artisan. The Webbs state categorically that they came

¹ Cf. William Lovett's *Autobiography* (1876), *Life of Sir William Fairbairn* (ed. Pole, 1877), and C. Thomson's *Autobiography of an Artisan* (London, 1847).

² F. Galton, in S. and B. Webb, *op. cit.* p. 438. See also below, p. 309.

³ Knoop and Jones, *The London Mason in the 17th Century*, pp. 58–9, 62, for the smallness of our knowledge even in a well-studied trade. Hence also the difficulty of using records largely about master-craftsmen to throw light on journeymen wage-earners—e.g. records of operative freemasons' lodges, such as those at Alnwick and Swalwell, described in W. Begemann's *Vorgeschichte u. Anfaenge d. Freimaurerei in England* (Berlin, 1907), Knoop and Jones, *The Scottish Mason and the Mason Word* (1939), etc.

⁴ Aspinall, *op. cit.* pp. 75, 79.

⁵ 'Rules and Orders to be Observed by a Friendly Society of Journeymen Carpenters and Joiners... Est. July 12th 1808' (Birmingham Public Library), Rules I, XIII, XV. I am grateful to Mr Jack Corbett of Birmingham for supplying me with this reference.

⁶ *Centenary Souvenir of the Friendly Society of Ironfounders* (Manchester, 1909), p. 20.

⁷ Aspinall, *op. cit.* p. 83. An example of unorganized tramping among shoemakers is to be found in the amusing *Sixty Years Gleanings from Life's Harvest*, by John Brown (Cambridge and London, 1858), pp. 23–5, 44, to which Mr John Saltmarsh of King's College, Cambridge, has drawn my attention. Brown eventually opened a billiards saloon in Cambridge, after a chequered and, if we are to believe him, uniformly brilliant career.

across no single case of an eighteenth-century trade unionist removed under them;¹ and a large collection of certificates of settlement from Newark records no single mason, printer or brushmaker (though the latter had a tramp station in the town in the early nineteenth century),² and only one hatter and currier over more than a century.³ The major obstacle to travel would be not the law, but the craft exclusiveness of the towns (though this was weakened by the eighteenth century, and in any case difficult to enforce in times of expansion).⁴ Yet the tightly organized Dublin crafts, which excluded even foreign trade unionists, sent and received tramps.⁵

The real question is how the craftsman came to tramp the whole country in the first place. The point is that a national network of 'stations' from Exeter to York such as we see among, say, the early brushmakers, is quite different from the pattern produced by the normal migrations of labour which is primarily regional.⁶ Nor is systematic travelling automatically adopted by trades with sharp seasonal fluctuations: if the hatters tramped in the eighteenth century, the tailors did not.⁷ Nor did the ordinary operations of trade unionism create national networks at this early stage. In France, where tramping was quite independent of the unions and in the hands of the ancient and rather unadaptable *compagnonnages*, trade unions did not develop national organizations until the 1880's or—like the hatters—the very end of the Second Empire.⁸ Where local industrial units were in some sense interdependent, and recognized as forming part of a national whole, as in the woollen industry, tramping is more easily explained; and this may account for its early appearance among the woollen workers. But why should the shoemakers, hatters or curriers, all of whom worked in locally self-contained markets and had little cause to know much about other towns,⁹ take to it before the 1790's?¹⁰ Possibly the

¹ S. and B. Webb, *English Poor Law History*, I, p. 336.

² W. Kiddier, *op. cit.* pp. 16–17.

³ Some 900 certificates from Newark are printed in Throroton Society, Record Series, vol. ix, pt. i: *A Miscellany* (1943). They cover the period 1697–1822.

⁴ Knoop and Jones, *op. cit.* pp. 9–18.

⁵ S. and B. Webb, *Industrial Democracy*, p. 75, for Dublin exclusiveness.

⁶ E.g. out of 105 Newark certificates for artisans and single men only a dozen come from outside Nottinghamshire and the neighbouring counties. See also in general A. Redford's *Labour Migration in England 1800–1850*.

⁷ F. Galton, *op. cit.* LXXVII.

⁸ Paul Louis, *Histoire du Mouvement Syndical en France 1789–1910*, pp. 151 ff. But Vial's *Coutume Chapelière* (Paris, 1941) suggests that, among hatters, rudimentary tramping arrangements were in being under the Restoration. On the relation between *compagnonnages* and trade unions, see E. Labrousse, *Le Mouvement Ouvrier et les Idées Sociales en France*, fasc. II, pp. 71–82 (Paris, Cent. d. Documentation Universitaire, 1948).

⁹ Cf. *The Trial of... Journeymen Hatters of Macclesfield* (Macclesfield and London, 1806), in which much of the argument turned on whether local masters and men (a) knew what the rates of wages were in Stockport, or (b) ought to be affected by such knowledge (Goldsmith's Library).

¹⁰ Wadsworth and Mann, *The Cotton Trade and Industrial Lancashire*, p. 377, suggests tramping among shoemakers in the 1750's (S. and B. Webb, *History of Trade Unionism*, pp. 46, 51, 80).

attraction of the great magnet, London, counts for something.¹ Nevertheless, it seems difficult to explain tramping as a whole without assuming some sort of travelling tradition (at any rate in some crafts) analogous to the continental habits out of which the institutions of the *compagnonnages* had developed.² Among the stonemasons there was certainly such a tradition; perhaps among printers; perhaps among one or two of the others.

It is always unsatisfactory to rest a case on negative evidence; and here we can, at best, leave the verdict open. One thing is clear: both 'ancient' and 'modern' factors contributed to shape the system, even granted that the old customs, which were to be adapted to new trade-unionist needs, were passed on through one or two crafts only. So peculiar and highly organized a system could only be erected on a well-built foundation of custom. On the other hand, its general adoption by the crafts undoubtedly reflected the need to defend local monopolies of apprenticed artisans against novel economic challenges.

III

Among older craft clubs, then, the tramping system became the very backbone of union. The hatters and ironfounders even built their emblems round it, the latter showing a tramping moulder with his pack saying 'Brother craft, can you give me a job' and receiving the answer 'If we cannot, we will assist you'. The Nantwich shoemakers were careful to include in their trade procession in 1833 'a shopmate in full tramping order, his kit packed on his back and walking stick in his hand'.³ By the mid-nineteenth century the system was very widespread. In 1860 it was in use among compositors, lithographers, tailors, coachmakers, bookbinders, smiths, engineers, steam-engine makers, stonemasons, carpenters, ironfounders, coopers, shoemakers, boilermakers, plumbers, bricklayers and various other crafts.⁴

The reasons why it spread are plain. In the first place (though this may not have been its original purpose) it relieved strike funds, and provided a means of countering victimization. Even at the end of the century we

¹ *Surrey Apprenticeships 1711-31* (Surrey Record Soc. vol. xxx), xv, where it is estimated that about 40 % of apprentices came from outside the masters' town. Lesser towns would naturally also attract outsiders, but London's magnetism was exceptional. Many would return to the provinces after finishing their time, or in bad times (C. E. Howe, *The London Bookbinders 1780-1806* (1950), p. 29).

² We need not assume any connexion between British and continental journeymen societies in their developed form; though the parallelism between their institutions—rituals and drinking customs, the *herberge* and the club-house, the *geschenk* and the tramp donation, *schmaehen* and the blacklisting of men or masters—is striking.

³ 'Thomas Dunning's Reminiscences' (ed. Chaloner) in *Trans. Lancs. Ches. Antiq. Soc.* (1947), LIX, p. 98.

⁴ *The Report on Trade Societies* (Social Science Association, 1860), pp. 141-6, gives an incomplete list.

know of masons who habitually went on the road as soon as a dispute began, so as not to burden the funds;¹ of course the man who got a temporary job while the fight was on was a great asset. The fight for recognition and a standard rate almost invariably led to victimizations, even if it succeeded. If men were to be 'sacrificed'—the phrase is the compositors'—they must be certain of a livelihood, and the tramping system normally gave them specially favourable treatment, sometimes distinguishing them from ordinary travellers. The masons gave strike tramps a green card, ordinary ones a white one. Tramping thus greatly strengthened the bargaining power of the men, a point already well-established among woolcombers in the mid-eighteenth century.² From this to a more sophisticated calculation of political economy was only one step. By removing the unemployed from places of slack trade, and keeping them in circulation, tramping kept the supply in the labour market limited. 'If it had not been in our power', wrote the General Union of Carpenters in 1846, 'to keep up our trampingsupport... a general reduction in wages would have taken place'.³ The printers formulated this most clearly. Tramping, noted the *Typographic Protection Circular* in May 1849, had now become a method of relief rather than of finding work, 'so that the trade is virtually maintaining a local poor law... under which pauper aid is dispensed to its casual poor, the rate-payer being the employed, and the Guardians thereof the Society's officers'.

This grim little phrase reflects the radical change in the system when it encountered the massive unemployment of the earlier nineteenth century—whether the technological unemployment which destroyed the calico-printers, woolcombers, etc., or the less permanent, but equally cataclysmic, cyclical unemployment of 1820–50. Once again we observe that the system had not been devised to meet the contingencies of industrial capitalism. It fitted the old woolcombers admirably: a smallish closed group of mobile craftsmen, in a fluctuating trade, operating under fairly stable long-term conditions. In extreme cases of this sort, as the Webbs have shown, it could virtually replace all overt collective bargaining.⁴ As the only properly developed form of unemployed relief, it was generally adopted by most trades having need of such payments; but faced with the gigantic stresses of modern capitalism, and above all the trade cycle, it broke down.

It would seem that the system was not strained beyond its powers until the 1830's and 1840's, though the London compositors were already

¹ Fred Bower, *Rolling Stonemason* (1936), pp. 45–6, an admirable description of the permanently tramping artisan; Aspinall, *op. cit.* p. 78, for the Bath shoemakers in 1803: 'Sir, I am ordered to inform you that those men... who can leave town are preparing as fast as possible, and some are gone already'; Dunning's 'Reminiscences', *op. cit.* pp. 101 ff., for the good use made of this technique by the Nantwich shoemakers.

² S. and B. Webb, *Industrial Democracy*, p. 162.

³ Higenbottam, *Our Society's History* (Manchester, 1939), p. 18.

⁴ S. and B. Webb, *Industrial Democracy*, pt. II, chap. 1, *passim*.

campaigning against it in the 1830's.¹ After that, however, it ran into heavy weather. We can follow the process rather well in the records of the small Journeymen Steam-Engine Makers (founded 1826; since 1921 part of the Amalgamated Engineering Union) as shown in Table I.

Table I. *Tramping among Journeymen Steam-Engine Makers, 1836-1841**

Year	Members	Branches	Total number of travellers relieved
1836-7	525	13	44
1837-8	695	15	224
1838-9	794	18	289
1839-40	876	18	893
1840-1	981	22	673
1841-2	994	24	2226

* Annual Reports. The number of travellers relieved is given separately for each branch.

The Steam-Engine Makers were neither specially migratory, nor specially badly off. Far more striking are the figures from other contemporary unions. The Ironfounders in 1840 paid out the best part of £11,500 on tramping—for a total membership, in and out of jobs, of under 3500. Seven years earlier they had only spent £800.² The four main printing unions, with 3400 members in 1841-2, relieved no less than 7200 travellers between them in that year.³ Of course a great many of these were long-distance tramps, desperately moving through scores of branches in search of work, and registered in each; but that did not lessen the financial burden. As the General Union of Carpenters said, vividly if ungrammatically:

Throughout the length and breadth of our native land there has not been a corner or village but what some of our members have perambulated in pursuit of employment; our high roads have resemble that of a mechanical workshop, or a mighty mass of moving human beings; we have various instances where twenty or thirty men in a body, of different mechanical trades, wending their way from town to town, asking leave to toil...⁴

The experience of the 1840's led to a major change: the spread of ordinary unemployment relief. The reasons for this were clearly not financial, for the cost of tramping was not high per person,⁵ and was more easily supplemented by local collections and private hospitality than static out-of-work pay. It seems rather that the massive unemployment of those years for the first time impressed the ordinary, non-migratory

¹ Ellic Howe, *The London Compositor* (1947), p. 226. Hostility even in the 1820's is recorded in C. M. Smith's *A Workingman's Way in the World, being the Autobiography of a Journeyman Printer* (London, 1853), pp. 13-14.

² *Centenary Souvenir*.

³ *Typographical Circular* (February 1891), p. 10, quoted from the 1842 delegate meeting of the Northern Typographical Union. If the London compositors are omitted, the tramp-load was proportionately even heavier.

⁴ Higebottom, loc. cit.

⁵ *Typographical Circular* (June 1891), p. 8. The masons paid 6d. a day relief until the 1880's, and estimated the cost of a night's lodging at another 6d.

unionist with the inconvenience of a wholly nomadic method of relief. Once again the Steam-Engine Makers illustrate the point. In 1836 the London branch introduced static out-of-work pay off its own bat, to the grave displeasure of head-office. By 1847, nine other branches, from Leeds to Portsmouth, had followed London's lead. In the 1848 Rules revision branches were formally given the right to institute such payments; in 1851 it was introduced nationally as an alternative to tramping.¹ About the same time the Ironfounders introduced a similar 'donative' payment.² The new Amalgamated Society of Engineers started life with it, but then its ancestor the 'Old Mechanics' had never relied purely on tramping—perhaps one reason why it overhauled the somewhat older Steam-Engine Makers.³ The ambitious National Typographical Association had abolished tramping altogether in the 1840's, but the slump broke it, and its successor, the Provincial Typographical Association (1849), reverted to it, though with misgivings.⁴ Not until 1872 was static relief introduced for good, though large local units—Manchester, Leeds, London, Liverpool, and Sheffield—had already taken to it.⁵ Even the old-fashioned General Union of Carpenters introduced it in 1863, doubtless as a result of the foundation of the more modern Amalgamated Carpenters in 1860. Of the large tramping trades, few continued to rely exclusively on tramping, like the stonemasons, who kept to it until the present century, filling up to five pages of their rule books with 'tramp laws'.

From this time on tramping declined rapidly.

IV

Before we study this decline and the reasons for it, let us recall the very striking mobility of many mid-Victorian artisans, as indicated by the tramp statistics of their unions. (Since these unions were far more representative than has often been supposed,⁶ it is reasonable to suppose that they throw light on the habits of unorganized workers in the trades covered by them,

¹ Annual reports, and various editions of revised Rules.

² *Centenary Souvenir*, p. 36. Immediately claims for sick pay, which had been inflated as the result of the absence of static out-of-work relief, fell sharply.

³ J. B. Jefferys, *The Story of the Engineers* (1945), pp. 19–21.

⁴ Provincial printing union documents of the period are available in the full MSS. excerpts of the Webbs and their secretaries, Coll. EA, xxx, in the London School of Economics Library; cf. there the 1844 Rules of the National Typographical Association, and the debate on tramping in the Provincial Typographical Association 1849 delegate meeting.

⁵ Provincial Typographical Association, 1856, delegate meeting; monthly branch reports.

⁶ Cf. the calculation of M. and J. Jefferys: 'The Wages, Hours and Trade Customs of the Skilled Engineer in 1861', *Econ. Hist. Rev.* (1947), xvii, 29–30. Less well-organized unions were nevertheless highly representative of the general body of workers in their trade, in such towns as they covered; cf. the calculations of Archibald Neill (British Association, 1875) about the degree of unionization in the Bradford building trade. For the early 1890's we possess the invaluable on-the-spot surveys made by the Webbs for their History, Coll. EA, iv (L.S.E. Library).

though these may not have been quite so mobile.) Thus in 1872, when tramping was already on the decline, and unemployment was low, 6 % of the Ironfounders took out travel cards, and the percentage of men who did so did not regularly fall below 10 until after 1888. The Amalgamated Tailors in 1877 had 5-6 % of their members on the road, of whom about one-sixth returned to their home lodges within the year; i.e. 4-5 % of the union membership transferred their place of work during this year by means of tramping. The percentage of travel cards taken out between 1869 and 1877 was much the same. Among provincial printers the figures are even more startling. Between February 1873 and December 1876 the union issued travel documents to an annual average of just under 25 % of its total membership (though a quarter of all these came from four large and very fluid branches at Manchester, Liverpool, Birmingham and Belfast). Since the average tramp covered several stations, the total number of reliefs was of course much larger—about 100 % of the union membership in a prosperous year.¹

It is not easy to analyse these figures. Some men tramped constantly, like American hobo workers—especially among masons, compositors and ironfounders. Among the latter the permanent nomads only rarely formed more than 10 % of those on the road, and after 1870 never formed more than 1.2 % of union membership, except in the slump-year 1878-9. Among the printers, whose trade was riddled with casualism, the proportion was probably higher, though how much higher we cannot say, since only the Ironfounders actually tried to calculate the degree of permanent nomadism. A much greater number of men travelled during trade depressions. In the 1860's the percentage of unemployed engineers who went on the road was about 35, and that of plumbers much the same.² An unknown number—chiefly of young men—roved for a few years. There are no statistics, but the custom was strong. George Odger, the Cornish shoemaker, came to London after such *wanderjahre*.³ The young Robert Knight, subsequently boss of the Boilermakers, went to 'see the world' before returning home to Devon; nor was he the only one in his trade to do so.⁴ The engineer, John Burns, took a trip to West Africa and travelled the continent before returning to Battersea and political fame.⁵ Even among farm

¹ Reports of Friendly Society of Ironfounders, Amalgamated Society of Tailors, Provincial Typographical Association, esp. P.T. Circular, May 1877. The Tailors' figures for 1869-77 come from the *Daily Chronicle*, 6 February 1879—obviously communicated by the union, for they are not readily calculable from its reports. Most of these sources are in the Howell Collection, Bishopsgate Institute, London. It should be noted that the membership of the Provincial Typographical Association is not quite the same as that of the Mileage Relief Association set up to look after its tramping in 1861. Some local societies affiliated to one but not the other. This does not substantially affect the nature of the figures.

² J. B. Jefferys, op. cit. p. 61. I am indebted to the officers of the Plumbing Trades Union for permission to consult their reports for the 1860's, when the union had for a while static out-of-work pay.

³ *The Life and Labours of George Odger* (London, 1877).

⁴ D. C. Cummings, op. cit. pp. 62, 156.

⁵ W. C. Grubb, *John Burns* (1908).

labourers, Joseph Arch roved the south Midlands and Wales before settling down, and the young George Edwards spent a year in foreign parts—some thirty miles from his native poor-law union.¹ F. W. Galton, himself a member of an old craft, records the liveliness of the tradition as late as the 1890's.² Some men again, in that period of rapid industrial growth, were semi-nomadic, leaving a permanent home for varying periods, or shifting their families from time to time, especially among builders, specialist craftsmen and supervisory workers.³ These movements, again, cannot be accurately measured. In small traditional tramping crafts probably almost everyone reckoned to tramp sometime in his life, apart from depression travel. In all trades, however, there seems to have been a fairly sharp line between the majority, who no longer reckoned to travel—except in the most unusual circumstances—once they had settled down, and a minority which was more foot-loose.

Whatever the exact kinds of movement—and these are only some of the sorts which inadequate analysis lumps together under the general name of 'mobility of labour'—there is no doubt that most of them decreased. By the 1870's George Howell could describe the system as obsolescent.⁴ As usual, the Ironfounders' figures are the fullest (Table II).

Table II. *Travelling among Ironfounders, 1850-1908**

(1) Period	(2)	(3)
	Annual average number of travel- lers relieved on last Saturday of year	Average number of members per decade, divided by figures in col. (2)
1850-9†	73	71
1860-9	75	126
1870-9	60	190
1880-9	52	232
1890-9	44	361
1900-8	63‡	295

* Ironfounders Reports. But before 1868 the distribution of travel cards was entirely in the hands of the branches.

† Figures not available for 1850 and 1852.

‡ The rise may reflect the growth of technological unemployment among some craftsmen founders, due to the development of machine-moulding—which the union did not organize—as well as the depressions of 1903-4 and 1908.

The number of travellers fell, absolutely and relatively, through the second half of the century, and if we take another index, the percentage of members who annually drew travelling cards, the decline continued even

¹ Joseph Arch, *The Story of His Life, Told by Himself* (1898), p. 40; G. Edwards, *From Crowscaring to Westminster* (1922), p. 27.

² In S. and B. Webb, *History of Trade Unionism*, p. 438.

³ R.C. on the *Housing of the Working Classes* (1884-5), xxx, 3707, 3754, for such builders in London, or George Lansbury, *My Life* (1928), chap. 1, for such a semi-nomadic family.

⁴ *Conflicts of Capital and Labour* (1878, 2nd ed.), p. 141.

between 1900 and 1908. Not even the major catastrophe of the Great Depression did more than slow it down. Indeed, nothing is more revealing than a comparison of tramping in the 'black years' of, say, 1841-2 and 1879. In the former the Northern Typographical Union relieved about five times as many travellers as it had members; in the latter the Provincial Typographical Association relieved only about double its membership in travellers.¹

The decline is especially palpable in depression travel. In the 1860's 35 % of unemployed engineers travelled; in the 1890's 10 %; in the 1900's, 4 %; from 1910 to 1914, 1 %.² Among the Steam-Engine Makers the proportion of tramp to static unemployed relief ranged between 1:2 and 1:6 in the 1850's; between 1:4 and 1:11 in the 1860's; between 1:10 and 1:60 in the 1870's; 1:15 and 1:70 in the 1880's. Even more striking is the decline among the traditionally tramping compositors. Between 1880 and 1889 tramp relief amounted to between 20% and 40% of unemployed relief; between 1890 and 1899 between 6% and 20%; between 1900 and 1906 it was never more than 9 % and fell as low as 5 %. The tramping printer was rapidly becoming extinct.³ While tramp relief was the only form of the dole, this tendency was to some extent masked. The speed with which static out-of-work pay overhauled its older rival makes this quite clear. Among the Plumbers, who reintroduced static pay in 1901, evidently because they were beginning to feel the need of some sort of unemployment pay,⁴ it was twenty times as important as tramp relief from the start.

Such diminution of tramping did not necessarily mean a decline in mobility. From the 1880's on, for instance, the growth of urban transport made it possible—for the better-off workers at any rate—to look for work within a large labour market without automatically changing their lodgings every time they sought, or got, a job beyond walking distance from their homes. London is a case in point.⁵ The tram replaced the tramp. It need not even mean a decline in long-distance mobility. The 'new model' unions which introduced static out-of-work pay also introduced methods of transferring workers from slack to busy places more efficient than the happy-go-lucky tramping systems. Engineers, Steam-Engine Makers, Boilermakers, Ironfounders, Amalgamated Carpenters and others evolved plans for paying or advancing the rail-fares of their members to

¹ 1841-2: 1226 members, 6036 tramp reliefs; 1879: 5200 members, 11,900 tramp reliefs (including payments for weekends, when men did not travel).

² J. B. Jefferys, *op. cit.* p. 128.

³ Half-yearly reports of Provincial Typographical Association; annual reports of Steam-Engine Makers.

⁴ United Operative Plumbers, 2nd Quarterly Report, 1900: 'Formerly when men were employed, there was a general desire to retain their services for a reasonable length of time. Now there is no regard shown, in some cases men are set on one day and discharged the next.' *Ibid.* 2nd Quarterly Report, 1902.

⁵ The *R.C. on the Housing of the Working Classes* discusses some of these problems; but with the exception of workmen's trains, we know little about the changes in the journey to work before the twentieth century.

distant jobs;¹ the carpenters even tried to turn themselves into a national labour exchange for their trade.² These devices were not, on the whole, very successful—indeed, like the emigration benefit, which became popular in the same period, they are interesting chiefly as signs of the growing adoption of orthodox economic ideas—but they were not negligible.

Moreover, the factors causing the decline were, in part at least, offset by others. This is probably least true of the most important form of tramping, depression travel, which tended to diminish pretty constantly, except in catastrophically bad years.³ The tramping of young men, on the other hand, was more than kept alive. In the first place the stream of apprenticed men from low-wage to high-wage areas continued unabated, all the more since certain trades—building for instance—in the cities came to rely for their recruitment of artisans chiefly on such immigration.⁴ Lawrence's 1897 inquiry⁵ shows that several trades in Bristol, the great gateway from the low-paid West Country, were composed mainly of such travellers, most of them regarding the town as their first stopping place. Many such young men would, of course, travel straight from their home town to the city, especially as there would be a nucleus of fellow-townsmen or relatives working there, who could find them jobs.⁶ Thus the transfer of some Dundee jute workers to Barrow in Furness soon led to that town becoming 'a sort of vestibule, through which the young Dundonian passed to the outer world'.⁷ On the other hand, the young man was just as likely to make his way to his final place of settlement by stages, for once he was saddled with wife and family, the roving life was no longer easy, and the blank, the lodge-house and the relief gave him the run of the country. There is no doubt that in the later stages of tramping, the system was

¹ The carpenters were prepared to advance fares up to 300 miles; though they halved this during the Great Depression (Rules of Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners, 1874, 1886).

² E. Beesly, *The Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners* (London, 1867), pp. 5–6.

³ But short-term tramping within large conurbations may have replaced much long-distance tramping, even here. Thus the six Tyneside lodges of the Plumbers in 1892 had an average of perhaps 70 of their 600 members circulating between them—each visiting two or three towns (United Operative Plumbers, 1892, Quarterly Reports). Since many unions forbade the granting of relief within a small radius of the home branch, such tramping often went unrecorded.

⁴ H. Llewellyn-Smith, 'Influx of Population into East London', in C. Booth, *Life and Labour*, III, pp. 74, 96; N. B. Dearle, *Problems of Unemployment in the London Building Trade* (1907).

⁵ F. W. Lawrence, *Local Variations in Wages* (1899). The results of his inquiry among trade unions are given very fully, pp. 56–80. They cover: bricklayers, masons, carpenters, plasterers, plumbers, painters, compositors, boilermakers, engineers, bookbinders, lithographers and ironfounders.

⁶ H. Llewellyn-Smith, op. cit. pp. 129 ff., esp. p. 134. *R.C. on Poor Law*, Appendix IX, p. 729, flatly claims that most countrymen migrating to London come to known jobs. But this does not exclude an element of uncertainty, as Will Thorne's experience shows (*My Life's Battles*, n.d., pp. 49–53).

⁷ G. Barnes, *From Workshop to War Cabinet* (1923), p. 20.

much used as a means of making the artisan's equivalent of the grand tour; just as the emigration benefit frequently was.

Moreover, with the mechanization of certain crafts, a new incentive to travel appeared, and caused bitter complaints during the Great Depression.¹ Instead of being fully trained as an all-round craftsman, the young man would be set on to man's work as an 'improver'—on less than the full wage. If he wanted to earn a man's wage, he had to take a job in another shop or another town, where only his ability to do the work, rather than his lack of full journeyman status, would count; though of course this sort of movement would be only very faintly reflected in the tramp statistics.

V

Nevertheless, in spite of such offsetting factors, there is little doubt that tramping, in the old sense, grew less. Why?

Let us consider the decline in depression travel first. Sometime between the 1840's and the 1870's a profound change took place in the attitude of the compositors to unemployment. The Typographical Delegate Conference in 1849 heard the argument that tramping was essential since a man with a large family could neither move easily nor emigrate; a contention which assumed that migration was the necessary answer to bad trade.² Thirty-eight years later the Manchester compositors, on the contrary, defended the idea of the newly introduced out-of-work dole by the argument that it would 'enable members to stay in various towns awaiting the call for their labour, keep them and their families together, and prevent members from being vagabondized by hawking their labour round the country'; in fact on the opposite assumption.³ Put crudely, we have here the difference between men who have accepted the trade cycle as the typical form of depression, both national and transitory, and men who have not. But this was a novel point of view. As Labrousse has shown, the cyclical crisis was not, so far as the bulk of workers were concerned, the typical one till well into the nineteenth century.⁴ In any case, up to the 1850's its effects appeared to be overlaid by those of other kinds of crisis, generating unemployment which could not be solved by staying put: e.g. the technological changes which broke up older forms of industrial craftsmanship. Moreover, what we may call the non-capitalist sector of the economy long remained large enough, and the capitalist sector localized and diversified enough, to make temporary migration appear a feasible escape from slumps. The mason, hit by depression in Norwich, could reasonably hope to find temporary employment in the small East Anglian towns;⁵ the

¹ *R.C. on Depression of Trade* (Parl. Papers xxii, 1886), p. 8 (Dukinfield Engineers), p. 9 (Glasgow, St Rollox Engineers), p. 12 (Neath Engineers), p. 18 (Bury Ironfounders), etc.

² Provincial Typographical Association, 1849, delegate meeting.

³ Provincial Typographical Association, 1872, delegate meeting, p. 18.

⁴ Cf. his *Crise de l'Ancien Régime*; also the valuable chapter of the Sorbonne course already quoted.

⁵ Broadhurst, *op. cit.*, chap. II.

engineer could feel that the next town on his tramp route might not suffer from poor trade.¹ Only in the major depressions did the national character of the slump assert itself, as the traveller found himself launched on the heart-breaking treks which the statistics record.² Hence the capital importance of the hungry 1840's in the break-up of the system; though the conditions which made tramping appear feasible survived, on a smaller scale, long after. Again, an age whose mouthpiece was Cobbett would hardly yet regard depressions as temporary interruptions of triumphant economic expansion, which would pass if only one sat tight for a few months. We may debate how and when the transition took place, but we could hardly expect the optimistic view to be widely popular among workers before the 1850's.

The pendulum was later to swing too far. Both in the Great Depression and the inter-war depression we find trade unions almost exhausting their funds in the belief that these were the usual slumps, which would rapidly pass. The dogged reluctance to migrate of workers in depressed areas between the wars may well reflect the last survivals of this faith in the capacity of the economic system to right itself in all circumstances. It would be wrong, however, to dwell exclusively on this faith in British expansion. In so far as the innovations of the early 1850's—static out-of-work pay, etc.—meant a recognition of the trade cycle, it marked an important stage in the education of the labour movement; the recognition that the capitalist economy was not something to be side-stepped, but had to be dealt with by understanding its specific laws of motion.

This new, and more mature, attitude towards the economic system explains most of the decline in the tramping of the out-of-work. It does not wholly account for the decline in other forms of mobility. Three possible causes of this are perhaps worth mentioning.

The nature of industrial expansion—the increasing size of the labour market on the one hand, the change in tempo on the other—discouraged the tramp. The effect of the former is neatly brought out by the Stonemasons' figures. In 1849 their union considered only four towns worth more than a single day's stay in search of work—London, Manchester, Liverpool and Birmingham. By 1887 there were forty-eight such towns. Table III summarizes the process, as reflected in the various editions of the union's tramp laws.³

¹ Cf. the great variations in local prosperity indicated even in the 1880's in the trade union answers to the *R.C. on Depression of Trade*; also the great wage variations between neighbouring localities, e.g. Wakefield and Barnsley (Coll. EA, iv: Barnsley Trades Council, L.S.E. Library).

² An extreme case from the 1840's: a compositor drew a London card on 1 March 1848, returning just under a year later. He had tramped to Brighton and round the south coast to Bristol, thence via Birmingham, Liverpool and Carlisle to Edinburgh, to Stranraer, Belfast, Dublin and nineteen Irish towns, returning to London via Liverpool, Yorkshire and Cambridge. Relieved in seventy towns, he had worked in three.

³ Operative Stonemasons' Rules of these dates.

Table III. *Towns in which tramping stonemasons were allowed to stay more than one day*

Year	Number	Remarks
1849	4	2 days
1853	4	3 days in London
1855	6	2, 3 or 4 days
1862	7	
1868	11	
1871	20	
1875	29	
1887	48	

Evidently one might expect tramping masons to settle locally, for a time at least; to travel shorter distances, or more directly from one main centre to the next; and local ones to feel less often obliged to go on the road. The analogous effect of a slackening tempo of expansion, under certain circumstances, is equally well brought out in Lawrence's 1897 survey.¹ In that year it was estimated that out of eleven trades in Leeds nine had a majority of members recruited locally; out of seven in Bradford, six had. But in Sheffield and Birmingham, which were still in a more effervescent stage of industrial expansion, only three trades out of twelve and three out of ten respectively were mainly composed of native townsmen. The more sluggish the current of expansion, the smaller the number of tramping artisans swept into it.

The second force making for greater immobility was the decline of casualism, the inevitable concomitant of small-scale competitive industry in the *laissez-faire* market.² To what extent casualism (or, what is much the same, persistent under-employment for a section of the labour force) decreased, we do not yet know; but a tendency to decrease from the latter part of the century is observable, though the subject still awaits investigation.

The third factor is the growing specialization of the apprenticed artisan. The ideal of the early craftsman, with his all-round training, capable, like the old millwright, of turning his hand to every task in the trade in any part of the country, could be maintained only for a steadily diminishing proportion of the trade. Perhaps there was self-interest in the complaints that Bradford bricklayers could not be admitted to the union, because they were only half-trained, and, if transferred to other towns, could not be expected to earn the full rate;³ or about the inferior training of engineers from the West Country, or the Yorkshire textile towns. Yet there was some truth in them. Even the men whose specialization did not indicate a decline in skill were affected. In the mid-eighteenth century the skilled woollen workers of Yorkshire and the West Country had been organized in one federation; at the end of the nineteenth, the Yorkshire General Textile Workers Union refused to organize the Stroud Valley, though invited to

¹ *Op. cit.* pp. 56-79.

² W. Beveridge, *Unemployment, A Problem of Industry* (1909), chap. v, for a general discussion of it.

³ Coll. EA, x, 255 (L.S.E. Library).

do so; so little did the two areas now seem to have in common. In the 1850's, shipyard and other boilermakers were in the same union; but had the utmost difficulty in understanding one another's problems.¹ Whether such specialization was one of training or business structure, it probably made the tramping system, on balance, seem less important even to many of its old supporters.

But as the old reasons for tramping lost their force, the opposition to it grew increasingly loud. The tramping section of a given trade included, besides good men with migratory habits, casuals relying on catching the peak demands in various places, also a very large number of the marginal and sub-standard workers; the first to be sacked, the last to be set on. A generation of artisans imbued with prudence and self-help grew steadily less enthusiastic about subsidizing what it felt to be its black sheep. Already in the 1840's and 1850's tension between tramping and non-tramping compositors was marked.² If the system survived so long, it was largely because the number of casuals was large enough to establish an important vested interest in it; the Manchester Typographical Society was riven by a major crisis when it tried to abolish it in 1851.³ As a speaker at the 1856 delegate meeting put it, 'he knew men who had been on the road ever since he was an apprentice. It was impossible to end tramping because of the vast number of incorrigible characters in the profession.'⁴ 'It was', said another speaker, 'admitted on all hands that tramping converted good men into bad ones'.⁵ It was equally obvious, as the Plasterers noted in 1879, that tramp relief benefited the foot-loose section of the trade (who were, *ceteris paribus*, not likely to be the best and most desirable workers) proportionately far more than the majority.⁶ Thus the hostility to tramping which observers noted in the 1890's and 1900's is easy to understand.⁷ Few unions actually abolished it—though the London and Scottish Typographers did so before the century ended; but since it grew steadily less important, this was unnecessary. Few, however, mourned its final disappearance in the decade of the first World War.

¹ Cummings, *op. cit.* p. 61.

² Provincial Typographical Association, 1856, delegate meeting *passim*; cf. also: 'You know what the condition of the tramp is. The man's appearance is a discredit to the profession he has spent seven years in acquiring the art of. . . . As a class those who tramp are little short of lost creatures' (1849, delegate meeting). W. E. Adams, *Memoirs of a Social Atom* (London, 1903) vol. 1, chap. xxxi, sketches some of these characters.

³ Minutes of Manchester Typographical Society, excerpted in Coll. EA, xxx, 58-9 (L.S.E. Library); also *Manchester Typographical Society Centenary Souvenir* (Manchester, 1898).

⁴ *Loc. cit.* p. 7.

⁵ *Ibid.* p. 6.

⁶ National Association of Operative Plasterers, *Annual Report for 1879* (Birmingham, 1880). Out-of-work pay would 'be more beneficial to a greater number of our members who cannot travel than that of travelling is to those who do'.

⁷ Beveridge, *op. cit.* (1930 ed.), pp. 241-5; Howell, *op. cit.* pp. 141-2, for a typical trade-union official view.

VI

One question must still be asked. What effect had a system of such organized mobility on variations in local labour conditions? Certain of the old tramping trades must, in their heyday, have come close to the classical ideal of a perfectly mobile labour force. Ought not therefore tramping to have led to a levelling of conditions in the area it covered? Unfortunately, there is no way of proving this. In the first place, the 'labour conditions' which may be held to determine a worker's choice between jobs include a great many variables, of which only one or two—standard time- or piece-rates, or standard working hours—are readily comparable. These, taken by themselves, may be more misleading than revealing.¹ In the second place, such wage and hour statistics as we possess before the last quarter of the century—even for well-documented trades like printing—rarely provide full enough comparable time-series to stand much analysis. Lastly, the small levelling effects of tramping (if any) are utterly swamped by other factors; some making for standardization, like the new habit of collective bargaining between employers' associations and trade unions over wide areas;² some not necessarily so, like the pace of industrial expansion.³

It may be that closer analysis will bring out some measurable effects of tramping; thus we do find slightly greater uniformity among the markedly migratory masons in the north of England than among the bricklayers, though this is probably too small to be significant. It may also be that fuller figures about the old-fashioned skilled and closed trades, which had a longish tramping tradition by the middle of the nineteenth century, would reveal a more striking tendency to level conditions.⁴ But the difficulty of measuring the tramping craftsman's influence should not lead us to underrate it. We know that he spread trade unionism, founding local branches on his travels;⁵ sometimes indeed head offices would deliberately try to bridge exceptionally long stages by founding relief stations or branches. We also know that the traveller acted as a link between different areas,

¹ Even figures for actual weekly earnings, virtually non-existent before the end of the century, do not allow us to judge the very important element of regularity of work, of control over working conditions and the general status which goes with it, of promotion prospects and traditional factors, all of which help the worker to choose between alternative jobs, where he is free to do so.

² This still awaits study. *Industrial Democracy* has not much about it; J. W. F. Rowe, *Wages in Practice and Theory* (1928), hardly goes back beyond 1906. But in important industries like ship-building significant developments took place in the 1870's and 1880's.

³ Thus, between 1850 and 1870, the weekly time-rates of jobbing compositors in the north-east rose very rapidly; those in the rural south-west, very little. Compared with these major movements, the small effects of tramping mobility are almost impossible to determine.

⁴ E.g. W. Kiddier, *op. cit.* p. 124. But these were piece-prices, which are always more easily standardized than time-rates, since they have less direct relation to weekly earnings.

⁵ E.g. of compositors in the Potteries, an important stage between Lancashire and Birmingham (Coll. EA, xxx, 77, L.S.E. Library).

passing on information about local wage-rates, advising on the best times to start a wage-movement, a walking encyclopaedia of comparative trade-union knowledge.¹ To what extent did 'union stereotypes'—standardized forms of demand, the content of which was filled in by local negotiation—travel along the established tramp routes?

We do not know, since the working rules or by-laws of local unions have not been much studied;² yet what we know is suggestive. Those of the Sheffield bricklayers, for instance, fixed a standard working week of 49½ hours in the early twentieth century. Most of the West Riding towns had the same standard week; but it was also in force across the Pennines, in the Ribble valley, along the Lancashire coast north and south of the Ribble estuary, from Merseyside to Blackpool and Fleetwood; and in a ribbon of towns from the Ribble via Darwen to Bolton. The rest of the Lancashire bricklayers worked quite different hours—53 or 54 per week.³ Or let us take another Sheffield rule, fixing extra payment for workers on culverts, sewage-work and chimney stacks. Rules of this kind, in a rather standardized form, appear in working agreements only in certain parts of the country—Yorkshire, east Midlands, the north-east (though such payments were not confined to those regions).⁴ We may even observe them on their travels; thus they reached Tyneside somewhere around 1890.⁵ How far did the flow of tramping artisans, moving along accustomed routes, determine the directions in which such formulae travelled? Again we do not know, for the network of such tracks is difficult to trace through the rise and fall of local union branches. Underneath this flux, however, we can sometimes discover, faintly, the customary ground-plan; perhaps in those public houses which long familiarity has named after a trade. In 1849, one-fifth of the stonemasons' lodges or relieving stations were, after all, still held in 'Masons' Arms', 'Bricklayers' Arms' and 'Carpenters' Arms'. Between then and 1859 'Masons' Arms' were used—not necessarily continuously—in at least twenty different towns.⁶ We should do well to

¹ F. Bower, *op. cit.* pp. 45–6.

² The most accessible collection of these, in printed form, is that of the bricklayers in the L.S.E. Library, which may be supplemented from the Trade Circular of the Operative Bricklayers Society (London Order).

³ Details in 'Standard Time Rates', 1909. In some towns only 49 hours were worked.

⁴ Working Rules of the Operative Bricklayers Society (London Order) in Jarrow, Hull, Loughborough, Newcastle and Gateshead, Sheffield, Bridlington, Leicester, Lincoln, Nottingham, Sunderland. Similar rules, but applying primarily to rather specialized local forms of work, pit-shafts, tide-works, work connected with the needle and fish-hook trade, and not as uniform in phrasing as the others, occur in Plymouth, Portsmouth, Redditch and Rotherham. It should be noted that the collection of fifty or so rules I have analysed is poor for south-east Lancashire, but representative enough for other parts of the country.

⁵ In Newcastle they appear in 1893, in Sunderland in 1894, as revised rule editions show.

⁶ Rules of Operative Stonemasons' Society, 1849, 1852, 1859. The towns are: Bristol, Leeds, Penrhyn, Princetown, Aberdare, Derby, Darwen, Scarborough, Stapleton, York, Bradford-on-Avon, Grantham, Liverpool, Retford, Warrington, Neath, Southport, Old Swan (Birmingham?), Leamington, Fishponds (possibly

remember these tool-carrying journeymen, tramping along routes, putting up at lodge-houses which had been fixed by the usage of generations of their predecessors.

Much of this is speculation. What is less speculative is the hard fact that mobility did not, and could not, eliminate very marked local discrepancies, even within small regions. The compositors are a case in point. We need not even consider the variations between district wage-rates, which were extremely large.¹ Let us merely remind ourselves of the proposal made by the Birmingham branch, as late as 1891, that one uniform rate should be established for all branches within six miles' radius of any large printing centre—hardly an excessive distance. The proposal was turned down as impracticable, with very little discussion.² Another debate at the same delegate meeting illustrates the difficulties of standardization through mere mobility even more clearly. Should the travelling printer, it was asked, claim his home rate if that of the town in which he found himself was lower? In theory everyone agreed that he should. In practice all sorts of difficulties were raised. How could Sheffield men get their rate in Chesterfield? How could the valley printers in South Wales be expected to find the extra five shillings a week to pay travelling Cardiff men? Was it not better for the Manchester man in Preston to take the lower Preston rate than the even lower Manchester out-of-work benefit?

No doubt a mass exodus from low-wage centres, a mass influx of organized men refusing to work below the rate, might have levelled conditions. But in the nature of things this could rarely happen. Let us take the extreme example of the compositors in 1841-2, when the number of travellers was double the total combined union membership—say, at a guess, two or three times the number of regularly employed members. Let us assume that these 7000 odd tramps circulated among only forty branches instead of the seventy-two which existed in 1850. Then, on an average, each branch might expect to receive something like three tramps a week, nothing like enough to affect the local labour market in normal circumstances.³ The very fact that well-organized tramping spread the

the same as the Bristol 'Arms'). Other 'Builders' Arms' used were in Brighton, Birmingham, Cardiff, Chester-le-Street and London—the 'Paviours' Arms' well known to modern civil servants.

¹ E. Edwards, 'The Disease and the Remedy' (Prize Essay of the London Society of Compositors, London, 1850), quoted in Howe, *op. cit.* pp. 305-7, gives very full wage figures. He estimates Scottish rates at 12-19s. a week, north of England 18-22s., south-east 18-24s., south-west 18s., and London 25s.

² Typographical Association, *Proceedings of Delegate Meeting* (Manchester, 1891), pp. 67-8, 75-6. The Birmingham problem, typically enough, arose out of an arbitration award making a rise conditional on a similar one in the surrounding and lower-paid towns. Birmingham immediately started a local unionizing campaign (Coll. EA, xxx, 73-5; Coll. EA, iv, 118 (Dudley), 294-8 (West Bromwich, Oldbury, Smethwick)).

³ But the strain could be much worse. An informant of J. Dunlop, *Drinking Usages of the United Kingdom* (7th ed., London, 1844), p. 132, reports a branch of Skinners, twenty-five strong, who received up to thirty tramps a month; doubtless in 1841-2.

surplus men thinly over a wide area, a defensive measure, made it difficult to use the system for aggressive purposes. Moreover, the flow of tramps did not spread evenly across a sort of plain, but was forced through a limited number of narrow channels—the local employers. Outside building and contracting, where a multiplicity of small firms and fluctuating jobs, or a smaller number of extremely large undertakings, made conditions more fluid,¹ there was thus little possibility of levelling wages seriously by mere mobility. The willingness of tramping artisans to move from less to more attractive centres was not in doubt. A large enough proportion of them was prepared, at some stage of their career at any rate, to behave like economic men. But their ability to do so depended on the absorptive capacity of the desirable town. Short of a sudden great expansion of general printing in Birmingham, the compositors of Smethwick or Halesowen, however willing, could only move there as and when jobs were vacant. Such levelling as took place must therefore have been a slow, gradual, long-term and not very startling affair.

Even if large expansions took place, it was not easy to use them for a systematic general levelling-up under the conditions of the mid-century. The compositors did consider whether to use the repeal of the paper duties, which was expected to lead to the foundation of numerous provincial papers, to establish a national news-rate. They found themselves unable to do more than suggest a standard percentage increase over whatever rate was already in force locally.² The Boilermakers—in their *laissez-faire* period—even had to retreat. Their original plan to establish uniform methods of overtime and night-shift payments all over the country broke down on the hostility of the lodges; and between 1842 and the beginning of district and national negotiation in the 1870's and 1880's each locality was entirely autonomous.³ It was not the free market mechanism which levelled labour conditions in Britain—except within a very small local labour market.

Birkbeck College, London

¹ Rowe, *op. cit.* pp. 65–7.

² Slatter and Hackett, *The Typographical Association, A Fifty Years Record* (1899), p. 39. Not much greater was the progress in standardizing piece-rates undertaken in 1891 (delegate meeting, pp. 8, 52–3). Only a local correlation with time-earnings was recommended.

³ Cummings, *op. cit.* p. 33. Compare the highly standardized Port Rules for ship repairing and maintenance work in the 1890's.

HOUSING IN ENGLAND AND WALES DURING THE BUSINESS DEPRESSION OF THE 1930'S

By ARTHUR PETER BECKER

I. THE HOUSING ACTIVITY

THE housing situation in England and Wales in 1930 found both countries decidedly inadequately housed. Although this statement is strong, it does not intend to belittle the great housing progress that had been made since World War I. The eleven years following the latter up to 1930 saw the building of, roundly, 1,500,000 houses, almost two-thirds of which received some form of state assistance.¹ This amount of construction, nevertheless, was totally insufficient to satisfy the needs of the people. In cognizance of this the National Government endeavoured to stimulate further construction by means of legislative action to subsidize housing, compensate losses through slum clearance, and guarantee advances to builders by local authorities. The importance of government aid in housing construction is reflected in the fact that almost 1,000,000 houses were built with some sort of government assistance. That the housing problem was peculiarly viewed as being one of slum clearance is of greatest significance, as will be shown later.

The story of housing development in England and Wales during the 1930's is, to be sure, the story of an unprecedented building expansion. Approximately 2,700,000 houses were built during this relatively short time. For the entire twenty-one years between World War I and World War II, England and Wales witnessed the erection of about 4,200,000 houses, or over one-third of the existing houses in these countries at the end of the period.² Moreover, due to the gathering forces behind this progress, the abnormal housing expansion developed into a boom to which Britain properly attributed its economic recovery from the slump of 1931. Table I shows an abstract of housing progress.

Several facts stand out even at the most casual inspection of these figures. We notice that, despite the depression of 1931, total output increased substantially from the year preceding. This increasing output reached its peak in 1936 near which it remained until 1939, when it took a sharp decline. With an average of 150,000 houses built during each year between 1919 and 1930, the output of the years 1930 to 1933 represents an increase of about 30 %. However, there can be no question that the housing expansion became indisputably established as a boom in 1933 when the output leapt another 30 % above the average for 1930-3 (84 % above the output for the

¹ 'Housing Costs', *The Economist* (19 September 1931), p. 514.

² *Annual Abstract of Statistics*, 1949, no. 85, p. 71.

period preceding 1930). Taking 1933 as the initial year of the boom we must say that the latter began at a considerably higher level compared to that of the 1920's.

Table I. *Houses* Built in England and Wales†*

Date (years ending 31 March)	Private enterprise		Local authorities		Total
	Without state assistance	With state assistance	Without state assistance	With state assistance	
1930-1	125,368	2,565	360	52,514	180,807
1931-2	128,418	2,333	2,485	67,576	200,812
1932-3	142,012	2,493	1,425	54,566	200,496
1933-4	207,869	2,913	—	55,840‡	266,622
1934-5	286,374	1,139	7,170	34,423	329,106
1935-6	272,281	222	13,197	39,160	324,860
1936-7	273,516	797	15,025	56,715	346,053
1937-8	257,081	2,551	13,950	64,020	337,602
1938-9	226,409	4,207	12,968	88,776	332,360
1939-40	142,661	2,849	10,221	40,231	195,962

* Each flat is counted as one unit.

† *Annual Abstract of Statistics*, 1948 and 1949, nos. 84 and 85, p. 70; also G. D. H. Cole, *Building and Planning*, p. 91, in which statistics from previous abstracts are cited.

‡ Includes houses built without state assistance.

Private and public enterprise. Table I reveals important information as to how the demand for houses was met. Private enterprise accounted for the great majority of the building, being anywhere from two to seven times that of government building in any of the years cited. It is to be noted that housing by private enterprise *with* state assistance and housing by local authorities *without* state assistance is practically negligible. The former phenomenon may be due to the fact that private enterprise prefers freedom from restrictions which would attend were it to accept state assistance.¹ Local authorities, on the other hand, take every available advantage offered by the state, especially financial assistance:

A significant trend which Table I reveals was the gradually changing participation in housing by private enterprise and the local authorities. After 1934, during which year the former and latter's respective high and low points were reached, private housing output decreased while output by local authorities showed quite marked increases for each succeeding year. Total housing output was thus maintained after 1934 when private enterprise in the field began to decline, mainly due to the offset provided by increasing government projects.

Throughout this period private enterprise concerned itself primarily with construction of houses better than the small working-class type. Actually, therefore, private construction did not fill the need of the working classes

¹ Except when subsidies are very great, such as those provided for in the Housing Acts of 1923 and 1924. These stimulated private enterprise with state aid to the amount of nearly 80,000 in 1927, the year when subsidies were cut. This cut led again to a slump in this kind of housing.

very much, except in so far as it resulted in 'filtering up': a process which helped labouring people to compete for the houses of the former owners who had moved to new quarters. While this may have aided people in those industry-abandoned areas, it alleviated very little distress in the newer industrial areas, where conditions were even more serious with great overcrowding into existing facilities by the influx of workers and their families. Experience and investigation showed that private enterprise could scarcely, if at all, create non-parlour working-class homes at rents which the workers could pay.¹ Consequently, it is obvious why private enterprise was not concerned much with housing for the working classes. This was true especially of the later years of the 1930's.

The geographic loci of housing progress. The greater part of the new housing development, especially that undertaken by private enterprise, occurred in the areas of relocated industries. The boom originated in the south-east, comprising the counties of Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Suffolk, Surrey (part of) and Sussex. New housing in this area proceeded at a rapid pace throughout the period. The other most important building areas were the Midlands and Greater London. Building in general, for the most part, occurred in southern and eastern England where the pressure of housing need was great indeed.

The loci of housing in these areas centred about the industrial and commercial communities. The heavy trend of houses built on the fringes of towns and cities, made possible by improved transportation facilities, presents us with a major pattern of housing by private enterprise.

The rapid increase of population through migration gave rise to many problems for local authorities. Housing had to be provided, together with corresponding services such as road-making and maintenance, street lighting, scavenging, sewerage, hospitals, and schools. Houses frequently had to be, and were, built in a hurry to the detriment of design and sound construction. They were built on any land which was quickly obtainable for the purpose, often without view to future development.²

Another cross-sectional view as to where housing took place is suggested by the slum-clearance programme. Roughly 300,000 old dwellings were replaced by the 1716 local authorities of cities with a population of 20,000 and above. The larger cities, as it would be expected, shared the larger proportion of the replaced dwellings. All the cities of the size mentioned were definitely handling their slum clearance and overcrowding-abatement programmes with vigorous effort in accordance with the corresponding Acts of Parliament.

The relation of housing progress to general economic activity. England's housing expansion had a very interesting effect upon recovery in Britain.³ Let us

¹ 'A National Housing Effort', *The Economist* (18 February 1933), p. 338.

² P.E.P. (Political and Economic Planning), *Report on the Location of Industry* (1939), p. 145.

³ This relation is more indirect than it is apparently direct, as may be indicated by substantiating statistics. The more direct relation seems to occur in connexion with location of industrial enterprise and the origin of the housing boom.

note several phenomena during this period. Table II presents a picture of employment in the building industry during the crucial period of depression and recovery. We see a marked decrease in unemployment in 1933, the year in which housing output increased considerably. It is also a fact that manufacturers of housing materials experienced a rapid increase in orders in the early part of 1933. Moreover, statistics show that housing output

Table II. *The Building Industry**

Year	Index of insured work-people in July of each year (1923 = 100)	Percentage unemployed (monthly average)
1929	121.2	13.3
1930	122.2	16.4
1931	126.0	22.5
1932	125.8	27.0
1933	129.6	24.1
1934	136.2	18.7
1935	143.3	16.4
1936	149.6	14.9

* Sir Harold Bellman, 'The Building Trades', *Britain in Recovery* (British Association, Economic Science and Statistics Section Research Committee), p. 400.

was increasing much faster than general business activity. This indicates that building development was in advance of general recovery. Employment in the building industry, however, did not show a greater proportionate increase than business activity until 1934. This was due to the fact that the building industry embraces a great number of workers, many of whom are connected directly not with the construction of new houses, but with the building of factories, shops, offices, public buildings, repair work, contracting, etc. Increasing employment was therefore of a highly selective nature, involving those workers in the building industry connected with house building.¹

Table III shows the relation between housing output, employment in the building industry, and employment in all industries. By 1936, when the country had risen from the depths of the depression, we witness the significant 30% increase in employment in the building industry as compared to a 14% increase in employment in other industries. Still greater significance is added to building industry progress when we realize that the number of workers in building trades had grown from less than 900,000 in 1934 to over 1,000,000 in 1937. The expansion in house building in the last half of 1933 seemed to spur the employment situation out of its depression in 1931 and 1932. There seems little doubt of the dominating role which housing played in the nation's economic recovery.

¹ Sir Harold Bellman (op. cit.), 'The Building Trades', *Britain in Recovery*, p. 400.

Table III. *Index of Housing Output, Employment, and Business Activity**

Year	Housing output (12 months ended 30 Sept.)	Employment in building industry (av. for yr.)	Employment in all industries except building (av. for yr.)	Employment in building and ancillary trades (in July each yr.)	Employment in all industries except building and ancillary trades (in July each yr.)	<i>Economist</i> index of business activity, recalculated
1931	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
1932	103.6	90.8	99.9	94.6	100.1	96.0
1933	112.0	100.0	102.7	104.2	103.8	101.7
1934	160.9	113.5	106.8	114.5	106.5	109.7
1935	163.5	122.3	108.8	120.0	108.7	114.3
1936	174.2	130.4	113.9	129.2	114.1	121.1

* Sir Harold Bellman (op. cit.), 'The Building Trades', *Britain in Recovery*, p. 412.

II. FACTORS IN THE DEMAND FOR HOUSING

One can separate the causes of the housing expansion into two categories: namely, normal forces, or those which had been rather frequent throughout the past, and abnormal forces, or those which were new or unusual in character. The first four of the following factors in the demand for housing might be thought of as 'normal', and are similar to those which existed in the United States during the same decade:

(1) *Numerical shortage of houses.* This factor has, no doubt, been the greatest of all in this fourfold category of normal forces for increased housing. In 1932 *The Economist* writes of the existence of 'an acute shortage of suitable accommodation for the lower-paid worker, as is proved by the appalling high rents taken for sub-tenancies in many parts of the country'.¹ Serious overcrowding has for ever been the most crying element of English housing problems.

According to minimum standards of decency, a shortage of over 1,000,000 houses was estimated to exist early in 1933. The census of 1931 revealed that 10,233,000 families lived in England and Wales. To this we may add 220,000 additional dwellings, to house separately each natural unit, if we want to approximate roughly a minimum decency standard.² In the same year there were 9,400,000 houses in England and Wales.³ The serious shortage is apparent in the difference between these two figures; the story rises in importance, however, when translated into human living conditions. As one might already have surmised, a shortage of houses is due to two causes; i.e. excess of natural units over census families, and actual overcrowding. Table IV gives an estimate of houses needed between 1931 and

¹ 'Rent Restriction (Amendment) Bill', *The Economist* (24 December 1932), p. 1182.

² There are more families than are taken into consideration by the Census due to married children living with parents. Families are considered larger than they really are.

³ *Annual Abstract of Statistics*, 1949, no. 85, p. 71.

1951. The upper estimate is the desirable and sensible standard as the already mentioned figures clearly indicate.

Table IV. *Dwelling Units*

(Estimate of houses needed in the two decades 1931 to 1951*)

	Lower estimate	Upper estimate
1. Shortage of houses:		
(a) Excess of 'natural units' over census families	220,000	220,000
(b) Overcrowding	200,000	800,000
2. Prospective increase in the number of families	714,000	714,000
3. Obsolescence	1,880,000	3,760,000
4. Slum clearance	300,000	1,000,000
Total for England and Wales	3,414,000	6,594,000
(add 10 % for Scotland)	341,000	659,000
	3,755,000	7,253,000

* 'The Demand for Houses', *The Economist* (31 March 1934), p. 686.

(2) *Slums*. Since slums were the most striking manifestation of the housing problem, they invariably received a disproportionate share of attention and consideration. This wrong emphasis on the problem encouraged quite a delay in approaching the real and most pressing problem of housing *shortage*. It was not until 1935 that a housing bill was passed with the primary purpose of alleviating the condition of shortage. Not only was the slum problem secondary in importance, but it was improperly attacked; namely, by clearance. This was beginning at the wrong end, for building for replacement alone merely shifted the people about to create new slums wherever they settled. 'The slum problem is due not so much to the defective character of existing houses, though many thousands of them are unfit for human habitation, but rather to overcrowding owing to a shortage (about 1,000,000) of houses.'¹

Despite the above criticism of the improper analysis of housing needs, the slum problem was indeed great, and it increased the demand for houses both by individuals and the Government. The programme of clearance is one directly aimed at raising the housing standards. The greatest obstacles, however, in the way of rapid progress in slum clearance were:

(a) The opposition of the owners of slum properties who would have been denied income from the sub-human living quarters which they provided.

(b) Tenants who were afraid of being forced to seek accommodation at higher rents.

Where the Government is seriously concerned with human welfare, the latter obstacle is most formidable. This is exactly what the state found out, and it was a natural expectation due to the housing shortage.

The acute extent of the slum problem is expressed in Circular no. 1331 (1933), in which the Government's intention to clear some 40,000 houses

¹ 'Housing and the Government', *The Economist* (4 November 1933), p. 850.

per year for the next five years was announced.¹ Previous to that time the rate of clearance was about 1000 per year. The 200,000 dwellings to be cleared in that programme by 1938 was but the bare minimum considered necessary. The lower limit of 300,000 in the previously cited table allowed for only 100,000 additional dwellings to be torn down in the thirteen years between 1938 and 1951. This figure, as can be readily seen, was grossly underestimated and approached more closely to the truth as the upper estimate was neared.

(3) *Increase in the number of families.* This has already been touched upon in reference to the shortage of houses. The prospective increase in the number of families is a substantial influence to be reckoned with in the analysis of housing demand. It should not be thought that an increase in the number of families is exactly parallel to an increasing population. If the latter were true we should expect only a slight increase in the number of families according to the population growth of England and Wales. However, the growth in the number of families was far in advance of the population growth. This was due to the increasing age level of the population which is being sustained by a smaller crop of babies each year. According to Table IV, the prospective increase in the number of families was extrapolated to the figure of 714,000 both as a lower and upper estimate.

(4) *Obsolescent houses.* The factor of obsolescence, if it could have made itself felt in effective demand, would have constituted the greatest single force in the normal demand for housing. As can be seen in Table IV, obsolescence was to have descended upon almost two to four million dwellings by 1951. One might observe that obsolescence really becomes an active force when it is 'least needed' (from the viewpoint of stimulating economic activity); namely, during prosperity. Replacement of houses, except where buildings approach slum characteristics, remains an endeavour to raise the standard of living where human need and health do not *necessarily* demand it. However, in the light of the great amount of obsolescence which prevailed, one could not be wrong in assuming that it played a substantial part in the housing expansion, once economic conditions had improved considerably.

The above forces set the stage for the housing boom. The potential demand which they created was similar to that in the United States. Yet no housing boom occurred in the United States during the 1930's while such a boom did occur in England. The reasons for this difference in experience can be found in the following unusual factors in the demand for housing in England during this decade.

(5) *Changing location of industrial enterprise, and consequent migrations of industrial populations.* There seems to be little doubt that the changing location of industrial enterprise produced the greatest immediate impetus to the increased housing activity. This industrial shift involved not a simple geographical relocation of former industries, but the creation of new light

¹ 'Slum Clearance', *The Economist* (15 April 1933), p. 796.

industries, a development which has been typical of modern industrialized countries. The development of these light industries took place in those geographical regions which offered the greatest economic advantages as a result of the great strides that had been made in transportation, communication, power, and other economic activities.¹ A particularly significant factor was the influence on location of industries of the populous and more stable markets in south England and the Midlands. During the early 1930's the areas of greatest unemployment were those concentrating on the production of coal, shipbuilding, and the heavy metal industries. These areas embraced much of industrial Scotland, the north-east coast area of England, and South Wales. In the development of light industries at this time one should not be too surprised to find them growing in those regions where employment and purchasing power were least depressed. This industrial development not only increased the problem of housing, but also was of immediate importance in starting off the boom. With the relocation of industries there was the expected concomitant migrations of industrial population, with its need and demand for housing.

The Research Committee of the Economic Science and Statistics Section of the British Association speaks of the development in perhaps the most important region undergoing the boom. The origin of the housing boom is clearly stated and indicated: 'The building industry in the South-eastern Section—as defined by the Ministry of Labour and comprising the important counties of Bedford, Buckingham, Suffolk, Surrey (part of), and Sussex—compared favourably throughout the crisis period.' Even in 1932, the worst year for the whole country, unemployment was little more than 19 %. In 1933, unemployment here was about 12 % while about 20 % for the rest of the country. By May 1934, it was down to 6.6 % against 15.5 % for all areas. Moreover, statistics show that unemployment experience for all industries in this area was continuously favourable.²

We see that throughout the period of the 1930's the building trades were especially active in these areas of relocation of industry. This activity was already quite prominent in the 1920's when about 1,500,000 houses were built. The housing output itself was quite large from 1930 to 1933 (inclusive), primarily in these regions. Neither the origin of the housing boom

¹ P.E.P. (Political and Economic Planning), *Report on the Location of Industry* (1939). P.E.P. has studied this problem quite carefully. It finds that industry, employment and accompanying economic activities are shifting in general to the south-east, Greater London, the south-west, and the Midlands at the expense especially of the north and Wales. Many economic factors are causing this shift: (1) raw material accessibility; (2) suitable labour; (3) site and services; (4) access to market; (5) finances. Southern England, embracing the area from, and including, the Midlands to the extreme south-eastern tip of England offer these greatest comparative economic advantages (excluding the War factor). Also, better transportation enabled industry to move further from the raw materials in north and west and be influenced more by other economic advantages in different areas; i.e. the Midlands, London, and the south-east.

² Sir Harold Bellman, 'The Building Trades', *Britain in Recovery*, pp. 395-437.

can be mistaken, nor its relation to change in industrial location and population migration.¹

The cumulative effects of population movement, relocation of industry, housing, etc. are indicated in the following words: 'The Midlands and South, to which large numbers of young adults have migrated, have benefited from an almost continuous boom in building and house equipment, and have been able to attract a very large share of new consumer-goods industry. In the absence of further intervention, it seems that the north and west will continue to lose population, and that the decline will occur in an increasing number of areas at an increasingly rapid rate.'²

Relocation of industry as a force in demand was negative as well as positive. This is manifested in the abandoned and superfluous houses which were left behind with the old factory buildings. Housing demand in these areas took a slump, no doubt, but not without the accompaniment of great alleviation of housing shortage. The latter benefit, however, must be judged against the other economic liabilities and misfortunes to the inhabitants who did not follow the industries and the employment that had been theirs and which no longer existed.

(6) *Rising real wages.* The business slump in England and the rest of the world brought down prices in general, and the decline in the cost of living became a factor of considerable influence in the housing boom, indeed perhaps the most important factor. Other countries which were hit relatively harder by the business depression experienced more severe price declines than England to the great advantage of her import trade. The prices of foodstuffs were particularly depressed, and inasmuch as England imports a large portion of these necessities, she accordingly benefited. From 1929 to 1933 the cost of living declined 14.5 % while money wages declined 4.5 %.³ Thus, the comparative stability of salaries and wages of workers (through contracts, standards, trade unions, etc.) combined with great reductions in the prices of necessities and other consumer goods, caused an increased purchasing power of nearly 12 % among workers in steady and full employment. Coupled with the fact that opportunities for steady and full employment were greatest in the areas which were being developed with new industries, it is not surprising to find that the housing boom was concentrated in these very same areas.

The above-mentioned increase in purchasing power undoubtedly was substantial enough to influence a great many persons so benefited to undertake the building of homes. This stroke of good fate appeared as

¹ This does not cancel the other immediate causes, but rather tells what happened before they became most effective in their own right. That is to say, in 1934 when the boom really began in 'a big way', low building costs, low interest rates, rising real wages, etc. 'took over' and became the additional driving forces of tremendous strength.

² P.E.P. (Political and Economic Planning), *Report on the Location of Industry* (1939), p. 16.

³ G. D. H. Cole and R. Postgate, *The Common People 1746-1946*, p. 539.

a sudden economic gratuity to a great number of families. Prudence commands that good fortune be not squandered and the evidence of a large demand for housing proves that prudence was widespread.

(7) *Publicity on home ownership.* The construction industry was fully aware of the increased purchasing power of the steadily employed and made a great effort to turn this advantage into its own direction. Extensive and intensive publicity was given on the merits of home ownership and the attractions of newly built houses. However, much of this publicity was merely competitive to sell to the workers in the new industries. To these workers, new housing was a matter of stringent necessity and many of them would have been in the market even if their purchasing power had remained stationary. Thus, publicity on home ownership probably had its greatest influence upon the housing boom by attracting the additional purchasing power of long-settled families, and did not influence too much those families in dire need of housing by virtue of recent settlement in the developing industrial areas.

Concerning the significance of publicity on home ownership, Sir Harold Bellman says: 'The essential driving force behind the boom has been an almost revolutionary conception of what are tolerable housing standards among a vast section of the population.'¹ Although we can acknowledge the refinement and size of the public appetite for housing, we must reject the word 'essential' as superficial in this connexion. People do not recast their conceptions and values out of rarefied air. Forces are much more basic than that, and perhaps the most basic were the increase in purchasing power and the development of new industries. Publicity was effective largely because of the increased purchasing power without which publicity would have contributed very little to the boom.

The effect of publicity was to aid in diverting a large portion of the increased purchasing power of the steadily employed to housing rather than to the purchase of other economic goods. Nevertheless, we have already noted that the new migrants were forced to devote a larger portion of their incomes to housing simply to have a place in which to live and this would have been done irrespective of publicity.

(8) *The changing complexion of the working population.* It is also necessary to point out that the changing complexion of the working population very likely resulted in the devotion of a larger portion of many a family's income to housing than formerly, and that this behaviour arose quite independently of the physical need for housing or publicity on housing. This tendency began, of course, prior to the 1930's. Comparing the composition of insured workers in 1923 and 1937 we find that the workers in manufacturing and mining decreased from 63 % to 54 %, while the workers in building increased from 7 % to 10 %, and the workers in distribution, commerce, transport, and services increased from 30 % to 36 %. The numbers of workers in distribution, commerce, and finance increased by nearly one million between 1931 and 1939, while during the same period workers engaged in various

¹ Sir Harold Bellman (op. cit.), 'The Building Trades', *Britain in Recovery*, pp. 395-437.

'services' increased by about one-quarter of a million.¹ We must add to these figures those workers who entered these occupations and professions prior to 1931 because it seems that the lapse of some time is necessary before people 'grow' into their new social and economic positions.

The significance for housing of this changing complexion of the working population is that the social and economic values of persons in distribution, commerce, finance, and 'services' is such that more emphasis is placed upon adequate and respectable housing as compared with workers in manufacturing and mining.

(9) *Improvements in transportation, and especially in flexibility, making possible the estates on the fringes of towns.* How the improvement in transportation facilities enabled estates to be situated on the fringes of cities is a well-known story of the modern urban phenomenon called decentralization. Fluidity, the term describing daily journeys between dwellings and working places, had become quite widespread. Houses were being built further from metropolitan centres, where they were surrounded by more sunshine and fresher air. P.E.P. said: 'This kind of development is proceeding in London at the present time. Figures recently published by the London County Council show that the population of the central area (City of Westminster and ten neighbouring boroughs) has declined by half a million since 1871. The population of London County has declined by 150,000 since 1901; while that of Greater London as a whole has increased by 1,600,000.'²

The importance of this force must not be minimized in its contribution to housing demand, although it would be fallacious to assign it an initiating function. Decentralization was far more widespread in the United States; nevertheless, that country had no housing boom.

(10) *Return of confidence.* No analysis of a boom would be complete without a mention of the state of mind which dominated the people at the time. It is human nature for people to be optimistic when 'things are going their way', just as they are pessimistic when 'things are going against them'. People are less cautious and more willing to take greater risks when they feel in a good mood. They are more 'confident', more 'certain', not in the absolute meaning of these words but rather in their perceptual configurations; as the Gestalt psychologists would analyse their condition, they are dominated by success while the thought of failure is shunted into the 'background'. Certainty and confidence are the result. Variable human nature is important, and confidence can and does play a weighty role.

III. FACTORS IN THE SUPPLY OF HOUSING

Even if the factors influencing the supply of houses had remained unchanged, the strength of the increased demand, as has been noted above, might have been ample to initiate a substantial boom in housing. We have also seen that a number of the demand factors were mainly potential in

¹ G. D. H. Cole and R. Postgate, *The Common People 1746-1946*, pp. 518 and 526.

² P.E.P. (Political and Economic Planning), *Report on the Location of Industry* (1939), p. 47.

nature. When combined with the prevailing advantageous supply factors of the 1930's the potential demand factors were in large measure made effective. The supply factors that were especially conducive to the housing boom of that decade were low building costs, favourable financing terms, the abundance of housing investment funds, and government aid.

(1) *Low building costs.* The level of building costs were decidedly in the favour of private purchasers, the majority of whom are always cost-conscious in the making of important purchases such as a house. Careful estimates for the working-man's non-parlour house show the drop in costs from about £350 in 1931 to well below £300 in 1933 and 1934 when the heavy impact of the housing boom was felt.¹ Substantial rises in building costs did not occur until 1937, when the average price had risen to £338 from £311 the previous year.² By then, however, general economic recovery was well on the way and did not affect housing output very much in an adverse way.

Building costs during the early 1930's were low primarily for two reasons: the low cost of materials and the high efficiency of the workers. The cost of building materials had declined more than the general level of prices, so building at that time became more attractive than it had been in prior years. Contributing to the low cost of materials for building was the sharp decline from 1930 to 1933 in the price of timber imports from Sweden. Beginning in 1936 Swedish timber prices rose, but by then the favourable prices of the preceding five years had already aided in the housing boom.

The efficiency of building workers reached its maximum in the early 1930's, which was the culmination of a long-run improvement in efficiency beginning with the post-World War I years. For a number of reasons (which cannot be brought up here) the efficiency of workers immediately after World War I was exceedingly low. While it improved during the 1920's, it took the uncertainties of the depression (including the likely fear of losing one's job to a more productive worker) to draw forth the greatest effort and skill of the building workers. The wages of building workers held their relative position with the wages of other employments so this was not a factor contributing to lower building costs. However, as the efficiency of the workers increased it had the same effect as that of a decline in wages of building workers.

(2) *More favourable terms in financing houses.* It is impossible to measure the effect of this force with accuracy.³ There can be no doubt, nevertheless, of the impetus which favourable financing terms can have on economic activities. England, presumably, reacted no differently to this factor in the 1930's.

These favourable terms were threefold in nature. (a) *Lower interest rates* had come about slowly and not as much as one might expect. Mortgage

¹ L. R. Connor, 'Urban Housing in England and Wales', *J. R. Statist. Soc.* (1936), xcix, 39.

² 'Rising Building Costs', *The Economist* (12 July 1937), p. 606.

³ A capitalistic or unregulated economy is presupposed.

rates went down from 6 % in 1930 to $4\frac{1}{2}$ % in 1936.¹ The natural forces determining mortgage rates of interest, as well as rates on other long-term bonded indebtedness, are always slow in generation.² In dealing with this problem we must remember how closely it is related to the experience of the building societies in England which financed most of the houses built throughout the 1930's. The building societies' rates of interest on investment tend to follow the major fluctuations of other long-term interest rates. This is because of the need for stability when dealing with long-term contracts. The mortgage rate, then, in turn is adjusted in accordance with the investment rate. This follows from the fact that the rate at which building societies lend to would-be builders is determined or governed by the rate at which the societies can borrow. The entire system is one of relative static inertia.

(b) *Longer periods of repayment of loans* were an especially attractive inducement to private building. Beginning in 1932, house buyers received the privilege from the building societies of repaying their loans in thirty years as against the previous twenty years. This time extension had the effect of reducing by approximately one-third the monthly payments that had to be made by buyers of houses. For those thousands of prospective buyers to whom a low monthly payment was a primary condition of purchase the increase in instalments permitted them to enter the market for houses actively. The above-mentioned reduction in interest rates also helped, although in a far lesser degree, to reduce monthly payments to the new owners of new houses.

To be sure, the longer terms for repayment of loans caused the total interest charge (up to and including the liquidation of the loan) to be greater, despite the reduction in the interest rate. Nevertheless, this seemed to be of little consideration to the vast majority of home purchasers. The size of the monthly payment was far more important.

(c) *Smaller initial payments* are self-explanatory as an inducement to build. Many people with smaller amounts of ready cash were brought actively into the housing market where before they were excluded. It is a commonplace that often the sole deterrent to home ownership is the weight of the initial payment. The easing of this requirement removed another obstacle to rising private construction throughout this period.

(3) *The abundance of housing investment funds.* One of the major forces which very likely caused the increase of investment in housing and a lowering of the interest rate on housing loans was the lack of attractive foreign investment opportunities. During the period of the 1930's total foreign investments did not experience any increase, a fact which may be attributable to the substantial decline in earnings on foreign holdings. Earnings on housing investments compared very favourably with average earnings on the vast bulk of overseas investments. This, coupled with the fact that high-yield foreign investment opportunities were exceedingly

¹ Sir Harold Bellman (op. cit.), 'The Building Trades', *Britain in Recovery*, pp. 395-437.

² Again a capitalistic or unregulated economy is presupposed.

limited during this period, resulted in the availability of large sums for investment in housing.

Not only were foreign investment opportunities lacking, but domestic investment opportunities were decidedly limited, particularly during the first half of the decade of depression. Even in the latter half of the decade, new investments (exclusive of housing) remained substantially below the record years of the last half of the 1920's. Thus, funds that otherwise might have gone into domestic industry became available to aid the housing expansion.

We have seen how the great majority of houses were built by private enterprise without public assistance. Most of these houses were built for sale and necessitated the acquisition of advances from building societies.¹ In fact, about 80 % of all the houses constructed by private enterprise during this period were financed by building societies. As we might expect, the result was a tremendous boom for the societies themselves. Table V presents a concise summary of the growth of the societies. Several tendencies are interesting to note. The number of societies declined slightly, even though the number of share investors increased by nearly 50 % and the depositors and borrowers by about 100 %. The rate of interest on shares fell, as has already been mentioned, more than 1 %, from 4.65 % in 1930 to 3.41 % in 1939. The rate of interest on mortgages also fell 1 % from 5.82 % to 4.80 % during the same period. The latter change in rate was initiated in 1932, when the societies extended the term of lending from twenty to thirty years besides lowering the rate 1 % below what they had been receiving previously. Funds advanced reached their high point in 1936 with £140.9 millions as compared to £88.8 millions in 1930.

An examination of balance-sheet items shows shares to have increased from £302.8 millions to £559.1 millions, their percentage of total liabilities having decreased somewhat from 81.6 % to 72.3 %. The average shares per investor went up to £260 from £209. Deposits in £'s increased over 200 % and formed a greater proportion of total liabilities. Average deposits per depositor also increased from £104 to £191. Total liabilities and assets more than doubled. Balances due on mortgages multiplied by 230 % and represented a larger share of total assets. The average amount borrowed remained the same, about £450.²

(4) *Government aid.* Statistics which have already been presented show that the housing boom was predominantly an effort of unassisted private enterprise. Government-assisted housing accounted for somewhat less than one-third of the annual output in 1930, 1931 and 1932. Housing with government assistance underwent a great slump from 1933 to 1935 in which year it accounted for only slightly more than 10 % of the total

¹ Building societies were established by the Building Society Acts of 1874 and 1894. The design was to secure from the investing public funds which in turn were to be advanced to builders with the security of first mortgages on houses. The societies are under government supervision.

² The amounts borrowed by builders averaged about 80 % of the purchase price or of the valuation of the proposed building.

Table V. *Building Societies from 1930 to 1939* *

End of year	Societies on register	Share investors (1000's)	Shares (£ millions)	Depositors (1000's)	Deposits (£ millions)	Rate of interest (%)	Total liabilities or assets (£ millions)	Borrowers (1000's)	Balance on mortgages (£ millions)	Mortgage rate of interest (%)
1930	1,026	1,449	302.8	428	44.6	4.65	371.2	720	316.3	5.82
1931	1,013	1,578	341.8	465	50.4	4.62	419.2	803	360.2	5.87
1932	1,014	1,692	380.9	546	61.5	4.52	469.3	869	388.4	5.87
1933	1,013	1,748	395.5	631	75.5	3.95	501.1	949	423.5	5.57
1934	1,007	1,858	424.3	695	97.3	3.80	555.6	1,067	476.2	5.44
1935	999	1,939	447.2	764	114.8	3.64	602.0	1,180	529.7	5.21
1936	985	2,011	480.7	777	128.4	3.45	656.2	1,295	586.6	4.97
1937	977	2,084	517.5	794	143.3	3.38	710.4	1,392	636.4	4.87
1938	971	2,153	548.3	804	155.7	3.37	758.9	1,479	686.8	4.83
1939	960	2,152	559.1	795	152.0	3.41	773.2	1,526	705.6	4.80

* Bank of England, *Statistical Summary*, May 1940, p. 45.

output. However, beginning in 1936, slum clearance projects began to be felt and by 1939 state-assisted housing rose again to somewhat less than one-third of the total output. The above indicates that government-assisted housing played a considerable, even though minor, role in meeting housing needs during the 1930's. Thus, the aid offered in the forms of Exchequer grants, rate contributions, unit grants, annual subsidies, and guarantees to building societies on their advances to builders, did have a substantial stimulating effect on housing with the exception of the year 1935.

The dominant motive in government aid was to deal directly with slum clearance and overcrowding, the two most pressing problems which private enterprise had largely failed to solve. It remained for the local authorities to provide housing for the working classes and to help maintain this housing with some sort of a subsidy. The workers at their wages could not move into better or less crowded dwellings. No alternative remained but for the state to make the improvement possible. Consequently, throughout this period the government undertook and endeavoured, by facilitating legislation, to raise the standard of housing for the working class. In 1930, the major portion of the financial provisions of the Act of 1924 were still in effect, despite the reduction of subsidy rates in 1927. The Act provided for reimbursement of 50 % of the average annual loss in slum clearance, unit grants to local authorities and housing trusts in aid of new building, and advances and guarantees to builders by local authorities.¹

The Housing Act of 1930, which followed the change of government in 1929, ushered in a new era as regards housing policy. Recognizing that the former policy of 'filtering up' was unsatisfactory, the Government undertook to attack the problem directly. The new government policy was focused upon slum clearance which appeared to them to be of primary importance. That this notion was erroneous (causing the Government to retrace its steps and start in a different direction) will be pointed out shortly.

The Housing Act, 1930,² required all local authorities of cities of 20,000 or more population to draw up and submit a five-year plan for the clearance of slum dwellings and the erection of new accommodations in their place. Slum property was divided into two main categories to be dealt with differently:

(1) *Clearance areas* (in which all buildings were to be demolished in a certain area). After the authority had ascertained the availability of accommodation for displaced persons, it was empowered either to compel the owners of the buildings in the clearance area to demolish them or else to purchase the land at a 'fair' value and demolish the buildings themselves.

(2) *Improvement areas* (in which some buildings were razed, and others repaired to make fit for habitation, also to abate overcrowding). The owner was compelled to pay the cost, either of the repairs that were

¹ L. R. Connor, 'Urban Housing in England and Wales', *J. R. Statist. Soc.* (1936), xcix, 5.

² 'Housing Bill no. 2', *The Economist* (5 April 1930), p. 761.

necessary, or, in cases where the expense of reconditioning the house would be unreasonable, of its demolition.

Grants from the Exchequer were revised upwards from 50 % of the annual average loss to the authorities on slum clearance schemes to annual grants of 45s. to 70s. per house for a duration of 40 years. Aggregate rents were to be based upon costs after taking into consideration these grants and additional rate contributions. (The authority retained discretion to vary rates between individuals.) We must agree that the Act at last represented a firm step to lower rents and raise the housing standards for slum dwellers, even though this was not the best way to tackle the problem, as we shall presently see.

In the light of the deepening depression the Committee on National Expenditures attacked the subsidy principle. 'There was another change of Government, and the cry for economy led to the postponement of building programmes, with the natural result of increasing unemployment.'¹ Of a challenging inference was the *Report of the Inter-Departmental Committee on the Rent Restrictions Acts*. It found that 'despite the amount of new building, the conditions of the poorer classes had not been improved as much as might have been expected, for the rents of municipal houses were often higher than those classes could afford'.² Definite suggestions as to meeting the most urgent needs were set forth in the report.

The decontrolling of rents by the Government at the time was inconsistent with the Housing Act of 1930. *The Economist* pointed this out in an article on 24 December 1932. The Government proposed in the Rent Restriction (Amendment) Bill to suspend for five years the decontrolling of Class 'C' houses (non-parlour working-class houses), recognizing that decontrol would result in a substantial rise in rents. In doing so the Government admitted that building costs had not dropped low enough for private enterprise to reach the low-paid worker. The Minister of Health maintained this view, substantiating this claim with statistics showing the rents of controlled houses to be 50 % above the 1914 figure, while those of decontrolled houses had risen on the average by about 85 %.³

Accordingly, the Housing Act of 1933⁴ was something of a compromise. It was, nevertheless, the most vigorous attack upon the slum problem up to that time. In the endeavour to bring private enterprise back into housing the subsidy of 1924 was abolished. Prediction appeared right in this case for private construction leaped by nearly 100,000 dwellings the next year. However, there still remained a gap between the rent of subsidized and unsubsidized houses. That indicated that subsidies ought not to have been entirely abolished, for, notwithstanding the lower building costs, the latter

¹ L. R. Connor, 'Urban Housing in England and Wales', *J. R. Statist. Soc.* (1936), xcix, 6.

² *Ibid.*

³ 'Rent Restriction (Amendment) Bill', *The Economist* (24 December 1932), p. 1182.

⁴ 'New Government Housing Bill Introduced', *The Economist* (10 December 1932), p. 1075.

had not dropped low enough to allow local authorities to let houses at a rent low enough for the lowest-paid workers to meet. Although the meeting of working-class needs was recognized as the duty of the local authorities, the latter would build only if private enterprise could not solve the problem. There also were provisions to facilitate finance and to lower the risk of advances by building societies. The maximum limit of advances by building societies was increased from 70% to 90% of the cost of construction, two-thirds the difference between these two amounts to be guaranteed equally by the State and the local authority. Moreover, the Government guaranteed 50% of any loss that might be incurred under this procedure.

Circular no. 1331 made a vigorous effort to deal with the problem of slum clearance under the provisions of the Housing Act of 1930. It injected new responsibility for the local authorities to step up the housing programme.

The local authorities were requested:

(a) To prepare and adopt a programme, the components of which should be:

- (1) a list of the areas in which clearance was necessary, with information of the number of houses to be demolished in each, and of the number of their inhabitants;
- (2) a list of the areas in which improvement by way of reconditioning or otherwise was necessary, with information as to (1) above;
- (3) a time-table for the initiation, progress, and completion of action to secure clearance or improvement, as the case may be, of these areas;
- (4) a time-table of rehousing co-ordinated with the displacements contemplated by the time-table of clearance operations.

(b) To make an immediate beginning with the programmes by the declaration of such areas as can be immediately dealt with, as clearance or improvement areas, and by making the necessary orders.¹

These programmes were to be drawn up on the basis of slums to be cleared by the end of 1938. It was the intention of the Government to clear about 40,000 houses per year for the five succeeding years. Previous to that time the clearance rate had been about 1000 per year. Within a year most of the 1716 authorities had their programmes completed, providing for the demolition and the replacement of nearly 300,000 dwellings. The growing momentum of this project and its effect upon increased government housing with state assistance has already been noticed in Table I.

In 1935, the Government finally came to realize in overt action that the real housing problem was that of overcrowding. This realization was expressed in the Housing Bill of that year. L. R. Connor states the provisions of the Act very concisely: 'Local authorities were to inspect and make reports and submit proposals as to abatement of overcrowding which

¹ 'Slum Clearance', *The Economist* (15 April 1933), p. 796.

was defined¹ and made a penal offence; urban authorities were to secure redevelopment of congested central areas and use their powers with regard to reconditioning; provision was made for the establishment of a Central Housing Advisory Committee² and Local Housing Management Commissions; local authorities' powers with regard to housing associations were extended; new Exchequer grants towards provision of flats on sites of high value, and otherwise in special circumstances, were made available;³ provision was made for consolidation of housing accounts and unification of conditions affecting local authorities' houses, and local authorities' by-law-making powers were amended and enlarged.⁴

With the Housing Act of 1935, the Government had finally hit upon the policy and machinery which the housing problem demanded. The organization and operation were not perfect, but they were on the right track at least. With the Housing Bill of 1938, government policy was implemented further. Subsidies for slum clearance and overcrowding-abatement housing were consolidated, the normal subsidy amounting to £5. 10s. per annum for forty years per house besides a contribution to rates. In general, the subsidies were increased to about 3s. 2d. per week, and the basis of subsidy reverted once again to houses and not the number of people in the family.⁵ The latter mattered less now since overcrowding standards (Act of 1935) had increased the correlation between houses and the number of occupants.

The general impression one receives of how the Government met the demand for houses during this period is extremely favourable. To be sure there was a few years' lag, due to uncertainty as to the real nature of the problem, and legislative experimentation in attempting solutions; nevertheless, the efforts of the Government, within so short a period, were well rewarded.

With the above as a background, we arrive at London housing specifically. Besides the immense amount of building on the fringes of London

¹ 'The Housing Bill of 1935', *The Economist* (19 January 1935), p. 110. Overcrowding is defined; the maximum standard per house occupation subject to proper separation of the sexes above 10 years of age would be as follows:

Where the house consists of	Permitted no. of persons
1 room	2
2 rooms	3
3 rooms	5
4 rooms	7½ (½ = child under 10 years)
5 rooms or more	10 with 2 more for each room in excess of five

² The Labour Party had long been pushing the establishment of an advisory Central Housing Council, with the desire of having it assist the Minister of Health, who should be made responsible for a national slum-clearing and housing programme.

³ It may be added that the Housing Act of 1935 stabilized the subsidy under the 1930 Slum Clearance Act and consolidated existing subsidies.

⁴ L. R. Connor, 'Urban Housing in England and Wales', *J. R. Statist. Soc.* (1936), xcix, 7.

⁵ 'Housing Bill', *The Economist* (12 February 1938), p. 338.

proper, construction of which has already been discussed, a great deal of housing activity occurred in what was called the Administrative County.¹ In spite of the decreasing population of this area due to decentralization, the number of families was still increasing² and resulted in additional housing requirements. The London County Council stated the severity of the problem when it revealed 250,000 persons living in condemned houses awaiting demolition under the plan of the Government slum-clearance policy. Most of these slum dwellings existed in the East End, in south London, and in the north-west. Overcrowding also presented a serious problem; not only in slum houses but in middle-class houses taken over by the process of 'filtering up'. These houses frequently had not (nor could have been) converted into flats for multiple-family dwelling. In 1935, London was found to house 70,000 overcrowded families.³

Experience had convinced the authorities that the housing problem was shunned by private enterprise and was left to be cared for by public or philanthropic organization. For the first time in London's history housing reform was tackled adequately. The activities of the London County Council⁴ were most important; nearly all of them were devoted to building large cottage estates. About 51,000 cottage houses⁵ were built between the close of World War I and 1935, most of them lying not within the L.C.C. area but rather outside it.⁶ Becontree, twelve miles from Central London, is the largest housing estate in England, containing over 25,000 houses and a population of at least 113,000. This was a remarkable achievement in the abatement of overcrowding and indicates what could be done if so desired. After 1935, emphasis was upon slum clearance, cottage building being relegated to the background. Of the 11,000 dwellings built between 1919 and 1937, the majority were erected in 1935 and 1936. A vigorous slum-clearance and building programme of 10,000 flats a year was aimed at. Many of London's slum areas were found to be small, which hindered decent redevelopment plans. However, in the East End, where the slum problem was greatest, it was necessary to draw up a comprehensive programme for rehousing by clearing much property that was not slum.

The overcrowding presented the most difficult problem because of the lack of land even in the Greater London area. Thus, the L.C.C. had to go quite far from the centre of the city to find adequate sites. The difficulty

¹ This is the inner area of Greater London which is administered by the London County Council. It contained, in 1937, a population of about 4,300,000 with 1,190,000 families.

² Explained by the decreasing size of the family.

³ 'London's Housing Problem', *The Economist* (London Supplement, 8 May 1937), p. 8.

⁴ Other organizations were the City Corporation, various metropolitan borough councils, a number of housing trusts and associations, and private organizations that raised funds by subscription or that possessed endowments.

⁵ The borough councils also made remarkable progress with the construction of nearly 18,000 houses between 1919 and 1937.

⁶ Due to scarcity of land upon which to build within the area.

here was that this required working-men to bear the disadvantages of travelling to and from work with considerable expense. The most acceptable solution presented up to that time was that satellite suburbs be created, industrially self-contained, at some distance from the City of London. This, an excellent idea, was to alleviate both the pressure of overcrowding and the inconvenience of wasteful daily travelling by workers.

Slum clearance and rehousing commanded a great deal of effort in the London area. The problem, recognized by the authorities, received prompt and vigorous action. It was not fully solved by the end of the decade, however, and much remained to be done. World War II, of course, increased the intensity and complexity of the housing problem.

University of Wisconsin

SHORT ARTICLES AND MEMORANDA

EARLY ENGLISH FULLING MILLS: ADDITIONAL EXAMPLES

BY REGINALD LENNARD

A FEW additions may be made to the list of English fulling mills anterior to 1327 which was contributed to the *Economic History Review* in 1941 by Miss Carus-Wilson.¹ Two of them certainly, and a third very probably, are of twelfth-century date, and are thus a substantial addition to the three instances of twelfth-century fulling mills which she discovered. As one of my examples belongs to the reign of Henry II, and another was the subject of a grant which may have been made between 1174 and 1180 and in which there is reference to a former tenant, these may well be somewhat earlier cases than those mentioned in the survey of the Templars' lands of 1185 (Temple Newsham in Yorkshire and Barton-on-Windrush, Gloucestershire) which are the earliest in Miss Carus-Wilson's list. Warwickshire, Huntingdonshire, and Dorset can now be added to the list of counties in which early fulling mills have been noted.

The following are the new cases, arranged in chronological order:

Kirkby-on-Bain, Lincolnshire (temp. Henry II)

utrumque molendinum quod ibidem habent scilicet tam illud quod est ad molendum quam illud quod est ad fullandum [Charter No. 174 in *Stenton: Danelaw Charters*, p. 118].

Heycroft, near Malmesbury (?), Wiltshire (1174-80 or 1187-1205)²

Molendinum nostrum fuleratium [*Registrum Malmesburiense*, Rolls Series, I, 435].

Minster Lovel, Oxfordshire (1197)

duo molendina mea tradidi, unum ad bladum molendinum et aliud ad pannos fullendos in villa mea de Menstra que sita sunt juxta pontem petrinum super aquam de Werich (Windrush) [Charter No. 90 in *The Thame Cartulary*, I, 71, ed. H. E. Salter, Oxfordshire Record Soc. 1947].

Sandford on Thames, Oxfordshire (c. 1219)

cum molendino fullonum [Charter No. 14 in *The Sandford Cartulary*, I, 15, ed. A. M. Leys, Oxfordshire Record Soc. 1937-8].³

Great Wolford, Warwickshire (1224-5)

'his fulling mill in the same vill' [Abstract in *Warwickshire Feet of Fines*, I, no. 351, p. 69, abstracted by E. Stokes and ed. F. C. Wellstood, Dugdale Soc. 1932].

Broadwas, Worcestershire (1240)

molendinum fulloneum [*Register of Worcester Priory*, ed. W. H. Hale, Camden Soc. 1865, p. 32 A].

¹ XI, 39-60.

² The mill was granted to a tenant by Abbot Robert and, according to Dugdale, there were only two abbots of that name before the fifteenth century. The first was abbot in 1174 and until 1180: the second succeeded Abbot Nicholas (who was deposed in 1187) and died in 1205. Abbot Robert's grant mentions a former tenant.

³ By the charter Ralph de Saunford gave the fulling mill to the Templars, so that here it was apparently not introduced by them.

- Gatchampton, Oxfordshire (before 1251)
in molendino fulleratico de Gathampton [Boarstall Cartulary, ed. H. E. Salter, Oxford Historical Soc. 1930, p. 59].
- Caton, Lancashire (1251)
 'the third part of a fulling mill' [I.P.M. in *Lancashire Inquests, Extents and Feudal Aids*, part 1, p. 185, ed. William Farrer, Lancashire and Cheshire Record Soc. 1903].¹
- Elton, Huntingdonshire (1267-8?)²
unum molendinum fulleriticum [Cartularium Monasterii de Rameseia, Rolls Series, 1884, 1, p. 490].
- Hornby, Lancashire (1285)
 'the fulling mill is worth 20s. 6d.' [I.P.M. in *Lancashire Inquests, Extents and Feudal Aids*, part 1, p. 261].
- Blakenham, Suffolk (1288-9)
De firma molendini fulonii xvijs [Pipe Roll of the English Manors of Bec in Eton College MSS., drawer C. 14]³
- Hampton Bishop, Herefordshire (c. 1290)
Et est ibi quoddam molendinum ad blada et aliud ffolerium [Red Book of Hereford, p. 8, in Camden Miscellany, vol. xv, 1929].
- Fordington, Dorset (1296-7)
Et de 6s. 8d. rec. de Iohanne Iowe de redditu assiso per annum pro uno molendino fullonico [Minister's Accounts of the Earldom of Cornwall, ed. L. M. Midgley, Camden Series, 1942, 1, 79].
- Penlyne in Lanlivery, Cornwall (1296-7)
Et de 18s. 6d. de firma alterius molendini foler [ibid. 1945, II, 245].
- Little Faringdon, Oxfordshire (c. 1300)
molendinum fullonis [Bodleian MS. Barlow 49, p. 70v].
- Skerton, Lancashire (1314)
 'the fulling mill there' [Lancashire Inquests, Extents and Feudal Aids, 1907, part II, p. 23].

Wadham College, Oxford

¹ There was still a fulling mill at Caton, c. 1580: see *A Sixteenth-Century Survey and Year's Account of Hornby Castle*, ed. W. H. Chippindall, Chetham Soc. 1939, p. 67.

² The Inquest of Elton is dated 1218-19 (3 Henry III); but, as Kosminsky has pointed out, it is really of later date and probably belongs to the year 1267-8 (52 Henry III), the mistake being due to confusion between the figures lii and iii: *Econ. Hist. Rev.* (1931), III, 28, n. 1. There are several references to this fulling mill in *Elton Manorial Records 1279-1351* (ed. S. C. Ratcliff, Roxburghe Club, 1946). The income received from it appears to have been 27s. 3d. in 1296-7, 27s. in 1297-8, 18s. in 1303-4, £2. 5s. 9d. in 1311-12 and £2. 19s. 4d. in 1313-14 (see pp. 51, 81, 110, 184, 230); but in 1349-50 it produced nothing *quia diruptum et debile* (p. 359). In 1350-1 the fulling mill and two flour mills were at farm for 40s. a year (p. 379). Among various expenses incurred for the repair of the mills, items amounting to 3s. in 1303-4 and to 2s. in 1311-12 are specifically stated to have been incurred in respect of the fulling mill (pp. 112, 185). In 1297-8 15s. 3d. was expended in fulling 22 ells of 'blanket' (p. 83). Hugh the fuller is mentioned in 1286-7 and his widow in 1297-8 (pp. 11, 57). Two *Walkeres* (mentioned immediately after two *Molendinari*) are included among the *famuli Curie* in 1297-8 (p. 69). Gilbert *le Walker* is mentioned in 1312 (p. 199), and Emma, wife of Bartholomew *le Walker*, in 1322 (p. 259); but references to Margaret Walkere, Agnes Walkere and Muriel Walkere who were fined for bad gleaning in 1331 suggest that the designation was then employed as a mere surname (p. 301).

³ I am indebted for this reference to Mrs Chibnall (Miss Marjorie Morgan), who informs me that in 1297-8 the fulling mill was at farm for eighteen shillings. The Pipe Roll and other documents relating to the English lands of the Abbey of Bec are about to be published in the Camden Series in a volume edited by Mrs Chibnall.

THE DEPOSITS OF HUGH DESPENSER THE YOUNGER WITH ITALIAN BANKERS¹

By E. B. FRYDE

ONE of the most important economic developments in thirteenth-century Europe was the large-scale penetration into the countries of north-western Europe by Italian business men.² Their success was partly due to possession of more advanced financial and trading technique and the efficiency with which their enterprises were organized, but in the case of the more important Italian firms operating in France, the Netherlands and England, drawn in the second half of the thirteenth century mainly from the Tuscan cities of Siena, Lucca, Florence and Pistoia, it was based above all on the possession of large financial resources. The original capital came from the merchants who founded the companies, but as each company grew, an ever-increasing proportion of its funds came from deposits of third persons. Most of these firms were chiefly preoccupied with trade from which much of their profits derived, and financial dealings, including deposit banking, formed only one side of their activities.

This aspect of Italian business, though of fundamental importance, is still comparatively little known.³ We know some general facts about the reasons for which deposits were made: preoccupation with safe keeping of money, desire of investment for profit and the need to facilitate one's financial operations and to make payments without actually having to transfer cash were all operative. The way in which deposits were made and the legal problems connected with them have been much discussed.⁴ But we remain largely ignorant about the actual derivation of most of the deposits. Did the bulk of the funds come from merchants interested in facilitating their financial operations rather than seeking safe investment? Was the money chiefly derived from Italy, and within Italy from Tuscany? To what extent were the financial and trading operations of the Italian firms in the countries of north-western Europe financed by money raised in those countries? The scarcity of readily available evidence has led some historians to adopt the view that the medieval Italian companies were financed mainly with

¹ I wish to thank Mr Roger Ellis of the Public Record Office for placing very generously at my disposal his transcripts of many of the documents used here and for his continuous help. I am very grateful to Prof. J. G. Edwards and to Prof. R. F. Treharne, who had read this article in manuscript, for their many helpful suggestions. All the manuscript references are to documents in the Public Record Office in London.

² The most recent account of this process, embodying the results of recent research, is in Y. Renouard, *Les Hommes d'Affaires Italiens du Moyen Age* (Paris, 1949, quoted henceforth as Renouard, *Les Hommes d'Affaires*), containing a brief but valuable select bibliography.

³ Y. Renouard, *Les Relations des Papes d'Avignon et des Compagnies Commerciales et Bancaires de 1316 à 1378* (Paris, 1941, quoted henceforth as Renouard, *Les Relations*), pp. 59–60. See also M. M. Postan, *Early Banking* (1946), *Econ. Hist. Rev.* xvi, 65. The Frescobaldi claimed that because of the injury to their credit caused by their large payments on behalf of Edward I during his war with France 'les seignurs clers et lays dount eux aveient en depos plus de L ml li desterlins le repriseient touz arere'. This probably refers to deposits throughout Europe (printed in C. Johnson, 'An Italian Financial House in the Fourteenth Century', *Trans. St Albans Architect. Archaeol. Soc.*, New Ser., I, 332).

⁴ Most recently by A. P. Usher, *The Early History of Deposit Banking in Mediterranean Europe* (Cambridge, Mass., 1943), I.

capital raised in Italy and that deposits received by them in the leading regions of north-western Europe, such as the Netherlands for example, were negligible.¹ There may be a good deal of truth in this view, but it clearly must be tested by systematic surveys of the evidence available for the countries in question.

The activities of medieval Italian merchants in England and their influence on the economic development of this country still await thorough study. The attention of historians has, very properly, been chiefly drawn to Italian trade in English wool² and the spectacular Italian loans to the crown have been the subject of a number of studies,³ though much still remains to be done on both these topics. The dealings of Italian financiers with papal representatives in England have been described fairly adequately.⁴ Valuable work has been devoted to the general trading activities of Italian merchants in England in the second half of the fourteenth and the fifteenth centuries, and we know a good deal about their legal position in this country.⁵ But on the subject of their financial dealings with English merchants and with lay and ecclesiastical magnates there are only brief references scattered through a number of works, dealing mainly with loans by Italians;⁶ Mr Denholm-Young's all too brief discussion of the deposits of Isabella de Fortibus, Countess of Aumale, with the Riccardi in the reign of Edward I stands virtually by itself.⁷

The object of the present article is to discuss some of the information available about deposits with Italian firms in England in the early fourteenth century, after more than a generation of vigorous Italian activity in this country. Our choice of the period to be studied was determined by the survival of an unusually large amount of information about deposits with the Italian financiers of one very important magnate of the later years of Edward II—Hugh Despenser the younger—which is to be found among royal archives through the accident of his execution in November 1326 and the forfeiture to the crown of all his property. Despenser was only one of a number of important men who suffered forfeiture of their property as a result of the political upheavals of the reign of Edward II, and because of these repeated confiscations far more can be learnt about the private affairs of many of the leading barons in the first quarter of the fourteenth century than we are ever likely to know about their immediate

¹ R. de Roover, *Money, Banking and Credit in Medieval Bruges* (Cambridge, Mass., 1948), pp. 40–2.

² A. Schaube, 'Die Wollausfuhr Englands vom Jahre 1273', *Vierteljahrsschrift für Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte* (1908), vi; R. J. Whitwell, 'English Monasteries and the Wool Trade in the Thirteenth Century', *ibid.* (1904), ii; G. Bigwood, 'Un Marché de Matières Premières: Laines d'Angleterre et Marchands Italiens vers la Fin du XIII^e Siècle', *Annales d'Histoire Economique et Sociale* (1930), ii; E. Power, *The Wool Trade in Medieval English History* (O.U.P., 1941).

³ For a full bibliography see E. B. Fryde, 'Materials for the Study of Edward III's Credit Operations, 1327–48', *Bull. Inst. Hist. Res.* (1949), xxii, 106, n. 1.

⁴ W. E. Lunt, *Financial Relations of the Papacy with England to 1327* (Cambridge, Mass., 1939); Renouard, *Les Relations*.

⁵ A. Beardwood, *Alien Merchants in England 1350–1377* (Cambridge, Mass., 1931). Dr A. Ruddock has written a number of articles on Genoese and Venetian trade with England, notably 'The Flanders Galleys', *History* (1940), xxiv; 'Italian Trading Fleets in Medieval England', *ibid.* (1944), xxix; and 'Alien Hosting in Southampton in the Fifteenth Century', *Econ. Hist. Rev.* (1946), xvi; and she is preparing a book on the same subject. For the fifteenth century see also H. L. Gray, 'English Foreign Trade from 1446 to 1482', *Studies in English Trade in the Fifteenth Century*, ed. E. Power and M. M. Postan (London, 1933).

⁶ E.g. N. Denholm-Young, *Seigniorial Administration in England* (O.U.P., 1937), p. 64; R. A. L. Smith, *Canterbury Cathedral Priory* (C.U.P., 1943), pp. 18, 26; D. Sutcliffe, 'The Financial Condition of the See of Canterbury, 1279–1292', *Speculum* (1935).

⁷ *Op. cit.*, pp. 60, 65–6

predecessors or successors. The period chosen has a unity of its own in yet another respect. The beginning of the fourteenth century coincided with the bankruptcy of two of the greatest firms of contemporary Europe, both very active in England, the Riccardi of Lucca (1300)¹ and the Bonsignori of Siena (1302),² as well as of a number of Florentine societies, internal conflicts in Florence producing the ruin of the defeated White Guelph firms and also of some of the victorious Black Guelph societies.³ The disappearance of these firms began a new phase in the history of the Italian merchant bankers in this country, during which Florentine societies became predominant. These repeated bankruptcies may have had a bad effect on the confidence of English depositors and distrust may have been strengthened by the fraudulent withdrawal from England of the Pulci and Rimbertyni of Florence in 1305-6,⁴ followed by the ruin of the Frescobaldi of Florence in 1311-12.⁵ It would not thus be safe to assume that the number of depositors drawn from among the leading men in England tended steadily to increase and that deposits by magnates were larger and more common under Edward II than they had been in the last quarter of the thirteenth century; the opposite may very well be nearer the truth. This gives added justification for treating, for the purpose of this study, the period of the early fourteenth century as a separate entity.

Hugh Despenser the younger was from November 1318 the king's chamberlain and soon became Edward II's chief favourite; our knowledge of his dealings with Italian firms begins in this period. During the last five years of his life (1321-6), he was the king's leading adviser and probably the most important man in the kingdom.⁶ Despenser divided his deposits between the two Florentine firms of the Bardi and the Peruzzi, and after his fall the two societies were required by the crown to hand over all that they owed to him. This involved, of course, the examination by the Exchequer officials of the accounts, vouchers and other documents arising out of his transactions with the Bardi and the Peruzzi. William de Cusance and Robert de Silkeston, two former officials of Despenser and auditors of his accounts with the Florentine firms, produced at the Exchequer records of two views of account, one for the Bardi and the other for the Peruzzi, held in November 1325, that had remained in their keeping.⁷ These views of account had taken place as a preliminary to a formal final account. In the case of the Peruzzi the view covers the period from 1 January 1322 to December 1324,⁸ and in the case of the Bardi it extended from 1321 and possibly even 1320 to the end of 1324.⁹ The Peruzzi surrendered at the Exchequer a formal account up to

¹ Renouard, *Les Relations*, pp. 95, 570 ff.

² *Ibid.*, p. 570.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 81, 570.

⁴ Cal. Pat. Rolls 1301-7, pp. 412 (earliest entry, dated 20 January 1306), 415 and 448. They ultimately went bankrupt in 1309 (Renouard, *Relations*, pp. 81, 570).

⁵ The best account of the history of this firm in England is in A. Saporì, 'La Compagnia dei Frescobaldi in Inghilterra', *Archivio Storico Italiano* (1944). See also C. Johnson, *op. cit.*

⁶ For his life see the *Dictionary of National Biography*; T. F. Tout, *The Place of the Reign of Edward II in English History* (2nd. ed. Manchester, 1936); J. Conway Davies, *The Baronial Opposition to Edward II* (C.U.P., 1918), especially pp. 91-105, and his article 'The Despenser War in Glamorgan', *Trans. Roy. Hist. Soc.* (1915), 3rd ser., vol. ix.

⁷ K.R. Mem. Roll 10 Edw. III (E. 159/112), Recorda, Michaelmas, m. 4d. The two views survive among K.R. Exchequer Accounts Various, E. 101/127/31.

⁸ E. 101/127/31, m. 2. The earliest deposit mentioned is known from an account of the Peruzzi to have been made on 1 January 1322 (E. 101/127/17).

⁹ E. 101/127/31, m. 1. There is mention of deposits and disbursements previous to 18 November 1321, including a payment to Despenser in Paris, possibly during a mission to France in 14 Edward II (probably in the second half of 1320: K.R. Mem. Roll 17 Edw. II, E. 159/98, m. 4).

19 November 1324.¹ They never formally accounted with Despenser for transactions after that date, but they claimed that £231. 19s. 8½d. were due to them from Despenser at the moment of his death;² this debt was reduced to £181. 17s. 9½d. in the course of subsequent accounting at the Exchequer.³ To substantiate their claims the Peruzzi apparently brought to the Exchequer all the relevant vouchers for the period from November 1324 to October 1326. Very many of the warrants for making payments and receipts for disbursements surrendered by them on this occasion still exist⁴ and they account for 96 % of the total amount that the Peruzzi claimed to have disbursed in this period.⁵ The Bardi produced at the Exchequer a kind of informal memorandum concerning their transactions with Despenser up to 22 October 1324, but containing a brief summary statement of further deposits and disbursements up to the time of his fall.⁶ They owed him then £777. 6s. 6d. and they satisfied Edward III for all the outstanding debt in March 1327.⁷

The Bardi were the more important of the two firms, and since the expulsion of the Frescobaldi in 1311 they had been the leading lenders to the Crown.⁸ As far as can be judged from the existing evidence, the relations of Despenser with them appear to have gone back further in time than his dealings with the Peruzzi, but from 1324 onwards the Peruzzi became his chief bankers. As late as June 1324 we find him trying to divide deposits fairly evenly between the two firms; each of them received in that month from Despenser's receiver at Bristol £1000 in English money, under the identical condition of repaying them later in that year in gold coins.⁹ But already in 1324 the Peruzzi received a larger aggregate amount of deposits.¹⁰ Their close connexion with Despenser during the last years of his rule perhaps explains the almost complete cessation of their loans to the Crown after the overthrow of Edward II. It was only in 1335 that the Peruzzi reappeared as important lenders to Edward III.¹¹

The sums deposited by Despenser with the two societies were very considerable.¹²

¹ K.R. Exchequer Accounts Various (E. 101/127/17).

² K.R. Mem. Roll 10 Edw. III (E. 159/112). Recorda, Michaelmas, m. 4d.

³ This is the difference between the total of disbursements amounting to £5917. 5s. and the total of deposits amounting to £5735. 7s. 2½d. (Cal. Pat. Rolls 1334-8, p. 343). A figure of £181. 17s. 2½d. (smaller by 6½d.) is given in Cal. Close Rolls 1337-9, p. 231.

⁴ They are in K.R. Exchequer Accounts Various (E. 101/127), nos. 19-22; also a few have been included in a miscellaneous file, E. 101/127/5 (nos. 3-6, 20, 21, 27-9, 35-7), and in Ancient Correspondence, vol. 49, nos. 146-51^a. A few of these documents have been printed wholly or in part by E. Re, 'Archivi Inglesi e Storia Italiana', *Archivio Storico Italiano* (1913), pp. 266-9.

⁵ £5694. 9s. 8d. (listed in detail in Table II in the Appendix) out of £5917. 5s. (Cal. Pat. Rolls 1334-8, p. 343).

⁶ E. 101/127/18.

⁷ K.R. Mem. Roll 10 Edw. III, Recorda, Michaelmas, m. 4d., Cal. Pat. Rolls 1327-30, p. 27.

⁸ W. E. Rhodes, 'The Italian Bankers in England and their Loans to Edward I and Edward II', in *Historical Essays by Members of Owens College, Manchester*, edited by T. F. Tout and J. Tait (Longmans, Green and Co., 1902), pp. 154-7.

⁹ E. 101/127, nos. 17, 18 and 31.

¹⁰ For deposits with the Peruzzi see Table I in the Appendix. For the Bardi see E. 101/127/18 and E. 101/127/31, m. 1.

¹¹ The earliest record of renewed lending by them is to be found on the Receipt Roll under 17 November 1335 (E. 401/329 and the corresponding Issue Roll, E. 403/285; see also a petition of the Peruzzi for allowances, E. 101/127/36). They did not become regular lenders to the crown till the spring of 1336. It is significant that when in the course of accounting at the exchequer in 1342-5 they were charged with a sum of £60 charged to them at the receipt of the exchequer on 4 May 1328 they claimed that 'ne sierent qoi cest est car en cest temps ne puis apres VIII auns ils ne furent al service nostre seigneur le Roi' (E. 101/127/36).

¹² The detailed figures for the Peruzzi are set out in Table I in the Appendix, based on E. 101/127, no. 17. For the Bardi see E. 101/127, nos. 18 and 31.

During an unspecified period up to 18 November 1321 he deposited £2170 with the Bardi and a further sum of £234. 6s. 8d. was entrusted to them at subsequent dates up to June 1324. The Peruzzi received £1066. 13s. 4d. on 1 January 1322. Between March and the middle of November 1324 Despenser deposited at least £4122. 4s. 6d. with the two societies, out of which £1000 were received by the Bardi and all the rest by the Peruzzi. There were of course withdrawals as well, and balances fluctuated, but at the beginning of September 1324 the two firms held in Despenser's name the enormous total of £5886. 7s. 8d. The predominant position of the Peruzzi, first apparent in 1324, was maintained during the last years of Despenser's life, and between 19 November 1324 and Michaelmas 1326 they held and received various deposits totalling in the aggregate £5735. 7s. 2½d.¹ The Bardi received during the same period no more than £930, out of which £500 were deposited in August 1325 and £430 in June 1326. The last known payment to Despenser made by the Peruzzi was on 16 September 1326, a week before the invasion of Queen Isabella, when they paid him £2000 deposited with them on 22 March 1326.²

A comparison with the sums transferred from England by the Bardi and the Peruzzi for the papal collectors gives some indication of the importance of Despenser's deposits. In the years 1321-26 he was a much more important source of funds for the branches of the Bardi and the Peruzzi in England than were the papal collectors in that country, and his average annual deposits during these years are invariably larger than the sums which the two societies annually transferred in the same period to the Papal Chamber in Avignon.³ The size of his financial resources is all the more striking when it is realized that the deposits with bankers formed apparently only a part of the reserve funds at his disposal. Thus a payment by Despenser in the autumn of 1324 of £800 to the Earl of Norfolk for lands leased from him⁴ was only partly executed through the Peruzzi, who paid to the earl £300,⁵ while £166. 2s. 2d. were paid by William de Cusance, an important clerk of Despenser, £100 were paid on Despenser's behalf by William Giffard and the rest was advanced in a number of unspecified payments.⁶

The wealth that made possible Despenser's large deposits was mainly derived from his extensive estates, and he used his position as Edward II's favourite and chief adviser in the years 1321-6 to increase continually his already considerable landed wealth, descending on some occasions to what amounted to sheer robbery.⁷ He had in his possession at the moment of his fall estates in England having, according to the inquisitions held after his death, an annual value of at least £1827. 6s. 0½d.,⁸ and his movable goods on those properties at Michaelmas

¹ Cal. Pat. Rolls 1334-8, p. 343.

² E. 101/127/22, no. 7.

³ Y. Renouard, *Les Relations*, pp. 130-1. In 1320 the Bardi and Peruzzi transferred 16,000 Florentine florins; in 1321, 8800 florins; in 1322, 3000 florins; in 1324, 3000 florins; in 1325, 2500 florins; in 1326, 3830 florins. The rate of exchange fluctuated in England, varying in this period from 3s. 2d. sterling to 3s. 4d. per florin (E. 101/127, no. 18).

⁴ For this transaction see Cal. Close Rolls 1323-7, p. 168, and Cal. Ancient Deeds, III, A. 4880; Cal. Close Rolls 1323-7, p. 327 and Cal. Pat. Rolls 1324-7, p. 52.

⁵ E. 101/127/17.

⁶ E. 101/332/27 (list of deeds belonging to Despenser at the time of his forfeiture, section of acquittances).

⁷ Tout, *op. cit.* pp. 138-9; Conway Davies, *Baronial Opposition to Edward II*, pp. 95, 97-8. A particularly outrageous act was the kidnapping and detention for over a year in 1324-5 of an important heiress, Elizabeth Comyn, until she surrendered to Despenser and his father a number of estates (Cal. of Inquisitions, Miscellaneous, II, no. 1024).

⁸ This total is based on detailed figures contained in a valor of Despenser's property drawn up in the exchequer after his forfeiture (K.R. Ancient Extents, E. 142/33). This does not probably include all the English estates in his possession in 1326.

1326 (29 September) were valued in the same inquisitions at £2503. os. 4½d.¹ His share of the inheritance of the Earl of Gloucester in Wales was valued in 1317 at £1276. 6s. 9¼d.,² and he had still other properties in Wales.³ Besides acquiring as much land as possible, Despenser extorted money whenever he could. His greed has not been exaggerated by historians, and it was one of the chief causes of his ultimate downfall. Among the money received in deposit by the Peruzzi figures a payment of £1000 from John Stratford, Bishop of Winchester,⁴ made by virtue of a recognizance executed on 8 August 1324.⁵ Stratford had got into disgrace for procuring for himself against the King's will a bishopric during a mission to Avignon, and this payment may be not unconnected with his renewed employment by the government on diplomatic business in the autumn of 1324.⁶

The money deposited with the Bardi and the Peruzzi came partly from Despenser's officials and partly from persons owing money to him.⁷ The largest sums were paid in by his leading officials; Cusance, a trusted wardrobe clerk and auditor of his accounts, William le Blound, the keeper of his wardrobe ('son garderober') and Richard de Tyssebury, his treasurer at Bristol. On some occasions the Bardi received money directly from bailiffs of Despenser's estates.⁸ For each sum deposited by Despenser's chief officials the receiving society usually gave letters obligatory under the seals of one or more of their representatives in England, presumably undertaking repayment. In case of payments by other persons unconnected with Despenser's private administration the two firms appear to have given only receipts, while payments by lesser officials such as bailiffs were received by indentures. Whether in the last two cases the Bardi and the Peruzzi also delivered subsequently letters obligatory to Despenser is not known. To some deposits were attached specific conditions, such as an obligation to repay money deposited in sterling currency in florins of Florence or other gold coins. In such cases the rate of exchange was probably laid down at the time of the making of the deposit and the Bardi lost on one such transaction. In this particular instance the letters obligatory also specified the date by which repayment of the deposited sum was to take place.⁹ In the absence of any original letters obligatory or receipts for deposits made by Despenser it is impossible to say whether this was typical of his dealings with the two firms, but it seems more likely that repayment was in most cases simply due on demand, at any time that

¹ This includes the value of his livestock and of the agricultural produce found on his estates.

² Chancery Miscellanea, C. 47/9/24.

³ Tout, op. cit. p. 139. In September 1319 Despenser's sheriff in Glamorgan was being given instructions about the levy of £3000 due to him there (G. T. Clark, *Carte et Munimenta de Glamorgan*, IV, 71-3).

⁴ E. 101/127/20, nos. 7 and 8.

⁵ K.R. Mem. Roll 17 Edw. II (E. 159/98), Recogniciones, Trinity, m. 3d.

⁶ His temporalities were restored on 28 June 1324 and he was again employed on diplomatic business in November 1324. The facts concerning him are conveniently summarized by Dr K. Edwards, 'The Importance of English Bishops during the reign of Edward II', *Eng. Hist. Rev.* (1944), LIX, 342-3.

⁷ The account that follows is based on the accounts with the Bardi and the Peruzzi, E. 101/127, nos. 17, 18 and 31. See also Table I in the Appendix.

⁸ E. 101/127/18. All the letters obligatory, vouchers, etc., had been mutually restored after conclusion of a formal account in October 1324, 'horspris qe devers les bailiffs mons. Hugh demorerent vj endentures de CCCL mars q' les ditz Marchanz rescyeiront'.

⁹ E. 101/127/18: 'quex les ditz marchantz promistont a rendre... dedeinz les touz seintz prochain avenir.'

Despenser might need the money.¹ This is suggested by a letter of Despenser to the Peruzzi of 9 January 1326 in which, after ordering a specific payment, he added, as a sort of postscript, a request that they should be ready to pay him in Lent all the remaining money deposited with them.²

There is no mention in records dealing with deposits by Despenser of any notarial instruments, and the books of the Bardi and the Peruzzi are never invoked as evidence of deposits. In this, transactions with Despenser resemble dealings of contemporary Florentine merchant bankers with other English customers. A certain amount of information concerning the activities of two other Florentine firms in England in this period has survived as a result of proceedings following the flight of the Pulci and Rimbertyni from England in or before January 1306,³ and the bankruptcy of the Scali in 1326.⁴ Both firms gave to their English creditors, among whom were magnates, ecclesiastics and merchants,⁵ sealed letters patent or else more informal bills written by the hand of one of their representatives⁶ and sealed with the seal of the society.

The evidence of the societies' own records, mainly their ledgers and accounts, is invoked less frequently. The Bellardi of Lucca, when questioned in 1307 at the Exchequer about the deposits with them of Walter Langton, Bishop of Lichfield, quoted, as evidence of the disbursements made by them at different times, folios 157 and 158 of their book of accounts.⁷ In transactions between the branches of different Florentine societies in England the books of the firms concerned appear often to have constituted the only record of debts and payments.⁸ It may be of significance in this connexion that when Despenser's account with the Peruzzi

¹ This was the most usual form of deposit with Italian merchant bankers (Renouard, *Les Relations*, pp. 59–60). An early example of its use in England in dealings with an ordinary kind of depositor is provided by a letter obligatory of the Pulci and Rimbertyni of Florence for a deposit of 350 marks made at London on 9 November 1304 by Nicholas de Knovyle, rector of Maidstone. The relevant clause runs: 'solvendas eidem domino Nichol' vel suo certo attorney has litteras deferenti London' ad voluntatem et requisicionem eiusdem domini Nicholai vel sui certi attorney sine dilacione ulteriori' (E. 101/127/5, no. 19).

² E. 101/127/20, no. 7.

³ Cal. Pat. Rolls 1307–13, p. 84; Chancery Miscellanea, C. 47/13/1, no. 25; K.R. Exchequer Accounts Various E. 101/127/5, nos. 7, 18, 19 and 22; Exchequer Miscellanea, E. 163/3/2 (includes five documents scattered through a large miscellaneous file); Exchequer K.R. Inventories, E. 154/6/8.

⁴ Chancery Miscellanea, C. 47/13, nos. 3 and 4; Cal. Close Rolls 1323–7, p. 607; Cal. Close Rolls 1327–30, pp. 40, 223, 368. For the bankruptcy of the society see also Y. Renouard, *Recherches sur les Compagnies Commerciales et Bancaires utilisées par les Papes d'Avignon avant le Grand Schisme* (1942), pp. 8–10.

⁵ The creditors of the Pulci and Rimbertyni included the Earl of Hereford, Lady Isabella de Vescy and Sir Guy Ferre among magnates (Cal. Pat. Rolls 1307–13, p. 84, and C. 47/13/1, no. 25), Adam de Osgodby, a leading chancery clerk (ibid. and E. 101/127/5, no. 22), Nicholas de Knovyle, rector of Maidstone (E. 101/127/5, nos. 18 and 19) and following unknown persons who may have been merchants: Godesman de Spalding (E. 101/127/5, no. 7), Hamund Cuting of Coventry and Henry de Guldeford (E. 163/3/2). Claims were also made by a William del Ide (E. 163/3/2) and by 'Aubyn chaunberleyn le Roy' who had deposited various valuables and other objects (E. 154/6/8).

The English creditors of the Scali listed in C. 47/13, no. 3, included John de Charlton, perhaps identical with the London merchant of that name who was mayor of the staple under Edward II (Tout, op. cit. pp. 226 ff.), Master Robert Lovel, Master Gilbert de la Bruere, who was a canon of York (Cal. Pat. Rolls 1324–7, p. 40) and Richard de Hamiselden.

⁶ The significance of this is discussed by A. P. Usher, op. cit., pp. 73 ff.

⁷ E. 101/127/25.

⁸ For two contemporary examples of this practice see Cal. Close Rolls 1318–23, p. 642 and Cal. Pat. Rolls 1324–7, p. 68. The records of proceedings in these cases are in Chancery Miscellanea, C. 47/13/2.

is examined,¹ the only entry there concerning a disbursement, which omits all mention of an acquittance from the recipient of the money, refers to a payment of £300 to the Bardi, who received it on behalf of the Earl of Norfolk whose bankers they presumably were. The actual payment was in this case very likely effected by a 'book-transfer', through adjustment of the accounts that the two societies had with each other.

In addition to deposits effected with them by Despenser's officials, the Bardi and the Peruzzi received money from persons owing debts to Despenser. Only one instance of this is known in the case of the Bardi, who received in France £400 from Henry, Lord de Sully, a former French envoy to England, in repayment of a debt he had incurred to Despenser in England.² The Peruzzi received payments from third persons on Despenser's account very frequently from 1324 onwards. In November 1324 they received, for example, £46 from Roger de Northburgh, Bishop of Chester, in part payment of an annual rent due for property he had leased from Despenser, and in the same month they received from the Bishop £100 in part execution of a recognizance for a larger sum into which he had entered in Despenser's favour.³ We had already occasion to speak of the payment of £1000 by Bishop Stratford in the autumn of 1324. John de Botetourt, an important magnate, paid 100 marks in October 1324.⁴ These various scattered payments do not constitute the only evidence for the view that Despenser employed the Peruzzi as his habitual bankers. More is to be learnt from the study of recognizances entered into by Despenser's debtors. Thus Simon de Montbretton, the constable of the castle of Bristol, in Despenser's custody, on receiving from him in June 1326 an advance of £20 by the hands of the Peruzzi pledged himself to repay it to the Peruzzi,⁵ while another knight retained with Despenser, Constantine Mortimer, on being similarly lent by Despenser £40 in October 1324, executed a recognizance promising repayment to the Peruzzi in which the name of Despenser is not even mentioned.⁶ Most significant of all is the fact that the Peruzzi had in their keeping several letters obligatory and records of recognizances concerning debts owed by various persons to Despenser,⁷ which shows that these payments were expected to be made to them and suggests that Despenser habitually directed his debtors to pay money into his account with the Peruzzi.

Payments out of the money deposited by Despenser were usually made by the two societies on his written warrants, though occasionally they paid 'par son commande[ment] de Bouche'.⁸ These written orders resemble closely royal warrants for payment addressed by English kings to crown bankers.⁹ Formal

¹ E. 101/127/17.

² E. 101/127/18. For Henry de Sully see Rymer, *Feodera* (ed. Record Commission), vol. II, part II, p. 507 and Cal. Close Rolls 1323-7, p. 208.

³ E. 101/127/17.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ E. 101/127/21, nos. 11 and 12. Similarly, the abbot of Waltham pledged himself to repay a loan of £100 to Despenser 'or to the merchants of Perouche on his behalf' (Cal. of Ancient Deeds, VI, C. 5924).

⁶ E. 101/127/17 and Cal. Close Rolls 1323-7, p. 320.

⁷ E. 101/127/21, nos. 20-22 (bond of abbot of Hayles), E. 101/127/5, no. 27, and K.R. Mem. Roll 11 Edw. III, Recorda, Hilary, m. 3d. (bond of the abbot of Leicester), and the significant statements in Cal. Pat. Rolls 1334-8, p. 343, and Cal. Close Rolls 1337-9, pp. 234-5.

⁸ E. 101/127/31, no. 1. Payment by the Bardi of £10 to John le Smale, Despenser's official.

⁹ Royal warrants for payment are discussed in Fryde, *op. cit.* pp. 109-11.

letters were usually sent,¹ but occasionally we meet with informal bills. One such bill explicitly promises that the Peruzzi will subsequently be given a [proper] warrant.² As in the case of the royal administration, the use of written warrants partly arose out of the requirements of the highly organized central accounting system of Despenser; the usual practice of the early banks of deposit in their dealings with ordinary customers was to act only on oral instructions, as employment of written orders involved greater possibility of fraud.³

The disbursements made on Despenser's behalf by the two societies provide a good illustration of the types of expenditure incurred by him.⁴ Every conceivable kind of payment is represented: payments to his household or for the household of his wife, payments for purchases of provisions, cloth and various military equipment, advances to the constables of his castles, to his other officials and to knights retained with him, payments of debts owed by Despenser as a result of his purchases of land, loans to abbeys, magnates and royal officials. For example, in March 1326 the Peruzzi paid 40s. to William de Hurle, carpenter, to lead a number of carpenters to Caerphilly, one of Despenser's most important castles,⁵ and satisfied William Chaillowe for £22 due to him for repairs carried out in Despenser's 'hostel du noveal Temple' in London,⁶ while on 1 April 1326 they paid £10 to William Pikerell, saddler of London, for saddles made for the forthcoming summer.⁷ The Peruzzi not only provided the money but on occasions they were themselves entrusted with purchases; in December 1325 they were directed to profit from the truce in Flanders to buy military equipment 'to send to Wales for equipping our castles in those parts' and bought both abroad and in London helmets, cuirasses, doublets and other things which they then transported to Bristol, spending altogether £96. 9s. 2½d.⁸ Perhaps it is in connexion with their purchases for Despenser that the Peruzzi had at one time in their custody a quantity of silver plate and two scarlet cloths which they later delivered to Despenser.⁹ The keeper of Despenser's wardrobe in the Tower of London, corresponding to the royal Great Wardrobe, who was entrusted with buying provisions and equipment, was on one occasion directed to buy furs 'par lavis et lordenaunce' of the Peruzzi.¹⁰ Like the other Italian merchant-bankers of the time they were, of course, not just financiers, but also general merchants dealing in every commodity on which a profit could be made.

For all disbursements made on Despenser's orders the merchants obtained receipts of the recipients of the money on the basis of which, and of the warrants for payment, they would subsequently claim allowance in their periodic accounts

¹ Here is a typical letter (E. 101/127/22, no. 11): 'Hugh le Despens' a noz amez Marchauntz Bonefaz de Peruch' et ses Compagnons, Marchauntz de la compaignie de Peruch' demorauntz en Loundres saluz.

Por ce qe nous avoms done de nostre doun a nostre cher Bachiler Mons' Hugh de Turpliton' vint mars por lui armer et apparailler quele heure qe nous avoms affaire de lui vous prioms qe ces deniers lui facez liverer. Et voloms qe ceste letre vous soit garrant.

Escriptz a Westm' le iij iour de Decembr' Lan de regne le Roy Edward fiz au Roy Edward XIX^{me}.² Special interest is attached to this letter as Turplington later deserted Despenser, was made steward of the King's household and was killed in 1330 at Nottingham castle defending Roger Mortimer (Tout, *Chapters in the Administrative History of Mediaeval England*, III, 18).

² E. 101/127/22, no. 1: 'Saluz. Nous vous Chargeoms qe vous nous facez enveer vint livres issint tote foitz qe nous les eoms y ce Meskerdi a nostre lever et a vostre venue a nous enferoms avoir sur ce du garrant. Escript' a Westm' y ce Mardi a vespre.'

³ See Fryde, loc. cit. pp. 110-111 and the sources there quoted.

⁴ Payments by the Peruzzi are listed in detail in Table II in the Appendix.

⁵ E. 101/127/21, nos. 5 and 6

⁶ Ibid. nos. 7 and 8.

⁷ Ibid. nos. 9 and 10.

⁸ E. 101/127/22, nos. 19 and 20.

⁹ Cal. Pat. Rolls 1334-8, pp. 277-8.

¹⁰ E. 101/127/19, no. 3.

with Despenser. Among payments made by the Bardi and the Peruzzi there were a considerable number of loans to Despenser's officials and to magnates, knights and ecclesiastics connected with him. For every such loan the merchants, in addition to the receipt, were expected to secure letters obligatory of the borrower promising repayment on a stipulated date or, alternatively they were to require the execution of a recognizance in the chancery to the same effect. Sometimes Despenser gave them precise instructions in this matter, but in other cases he left them a certain degree of latitude, directing them to receive such security as they would be willing to answer for.¹ Normally the resulting letters obligatory and the recognizances enrolled in the chancery bear the same date as the receipts for the loans or are dated on the following day,² which testifies to the scrupulous care with which the two societies carried out these instructions. As a check on them Despenser, from time to time, delegated someone to inspect the recognizances executed in his favour in the chancery, and the results of the inspection were then communicated to the auditors of his accounts.³

Accounting between Despenser and his bankers took place before auditors delegated by him, and the initiative appears to have been always his. There is evidence of accounting on at least two different occasions. In the autumn of 1325 (though this might be an error for 1324) two specially delegated auditors held the views of the accounts of both the Bardi and the Peruzzi;⁴ the resulting documents record transactions up to only the last months of 1324.⁵ These views may have constituted a first stage leading up to the drawing of formal accounts; we possess a formal account with the Peruzzi covering transactions up to 19 November 1324,⁶ and there was a similar account with the Bardi for the period up to 22 October 1324.⁷ After accounting had been completed, Despenser and the merchants delivered to each other all letters obligatory, acquittances and other documents in their possession, and an indenture was drawn up recording this and mutually acquitting them of all debts and liabilities incurred up to that day.⁸ On 19 November 1324 the Peruzzi owed to Despenser £594. 11s. 2d., which was entered as the first entry on a new account roll;⁹ the outstanding debt of the Bardi at the moment of the conclusion of their formal account was treated in the same way.¹⁰ In July 1326 the Peruzzi were ordered to account before the two 'auditours de noz accountes en Engleterre'. The accounting covered the period from at least the last months of 1325, for a letter of Despenser to the auditors, which constitutes our sole source of information about it,¹¹ ordered them to grant allowance for a number of payments going back to this time.¹²

¹ Ancient Correspondence, vol. 49, no. 149.

² For example, E. 101/127/21, no. 4, and Cal. Close Rolls 1323-7, p. 542 (John le Smale); E. 101/127/21, nos. 1 and 2, and Cal. Close Rolls 1323-7, p. 572 (Robert de Watevill); E. 101/127/17 and Cal. Close Rolls 1323-7, p. 320 (Constantine Mortimer); E. 101/127/5, no. 35, and Cal. Close Rolls 1323-7, p. 493 (Robert de Wodehouse).

³ E. 101/127/5, no. 34.

⁴ K.R. Mem. Roll 10 Edw. III, Recorda, Michaelmas, m. 4d. The date of the views is supplied by a statement of the two auditors before the exchequer, whose recollection of the events of more than ten years before may not have been quite correct.

⁵ E. 101/127/31.

⁶ E. 101/127/17.

⁷ There are references to it in E. 101/127/18.

⁸ E. 101/127, nos. 17 and 18. A transcript of the indenture with the Peruzzi is enrolled in K.R. Mem. Roll 11 Edw. III, Recorda, Michaelmas, m. 2d.

⁹ E. 101/127/17.

¹⁰ E. 101/127/18 (35s.).

¹¹ E. 101/127/5, no. 34.

¹² For example, loan of £100 to the abbot of Waltham. Only the letter ordering it has survived, dated 30 November 1325, but it bears an Italian endorsement stating that the Peruzzi received it on 6 December and payment followed probably very soon afterwards (Ancient Correspondence, vol. 49, no. 147).

No formal account was drawn up on this occasion, possibly because of Despenser's overthrow and death a few months later.

The use made by Despenser of his deposits clearly shows that he employed bankers mainly for the same reasons for which most people possess bank accounts to-day. Freedom from having to store large sums of money himself, possession of a central 'treasury' in the chief trading and financial centre of the kingdom, convenience of being able to direct third persons to pay into that central 'treasury' any debts that they owed him, and above all facilities for effecting payments quickly and with practically no risk, without having to transport any money, these were substantial advantages of which Despenser availed himself to the full. For the same reasons in the third quarter of the fourteenth century a considerable proportion of the more substantial persons had bank deposits in Bruges,¹ and all the more important merchants possessed current accounts in banks in fourteenth-century Venice.² Despenser did not make much use of the facilities provided by the Italian firms for transfers of money from country to country and for effecting payments in foreign currencies, though of course he availed himself of them on the few occasions when he had need for this. The Bardi paid him in Paris £370 during a mission to France, probably in 1320,³ and on one occasion they received on his behalf £400 in France.⁴ In 1324 Despenser caused the Bardi and the Peruzzi to repay him in gold coins the equivalent of two deposits of £1000 each, made with them earlier on in the same year.⁵ To a limited extent he used the two societies to effect transfers of money within England. Most of their payments on his behalf were made at London, but they collected some of the deposits at Bristol or even directly from Despenser's bailiffs;⁶ occasionally they also made disbursements outside London, bringing him, for example, large sums of money to the castle of Porchester in Hampshire.⁷

In studying Despenser's dealings with the Bardi and the Peruzzi one is impressed by their reliability and the extreme punctuality with which they made payments. Their branches in London had always enough money at their disposal to execute immediately any payment that Despenser might order; we find them paying £1000 or even £2000 at a time. They allowed him to overdraw his account; at the moment of Despenser's fall he owed the Peruzzi £181. 17s. 9½d.⁸ On obtaining an order to pay money the Peruzzi always endorsed the writ with the date on which they had received it and the comparison of these endorsements with the dates of the acquittances given them by the recipients of the money reveals that almost invariably payment was made on the day of the receipt of the mandate to pay or very shortly afterwards.

There is no evidence in Despenser's accounts with the Bardi and the Peruzzi that he received any dividends on his deposits. The Florentine firms of this period made payments on the deposits of many Italian depositors,⁹ and Bishop Walter Langton of Lichfield received some remuneration for his deposits with the Bellardi of Lucca in the last years of Edward I's reign.¹⁰ But it is conceivable that Despenser's deposits were subject to too great fluctuations to make this profitable for the two firms in his case. Nor, on the other hand, is there evidence

¹ R. de Roover, *Money, Banking and Credit in Medieval Bruges*, pp. 279 ff.

² G. Luzzatto, 'Les activités économiques du Patriciat vénitien', *Annales d'Histoire Economique et Sociale* (1937), ix, 57; Y. Renouard, *Les Hommes d'Affaires Italiens du Moyen Age*, pp. 112-13.

³ K.R. Mem. Roll 17 Edw. II, E. 159/98, m. 4, mentioning a mission in 14 Edward II.

⁴ *Supra*, p. 351.

⁵ *Supra*, p. 347.

⁶ *Supra*, p. 349.

⁷ See Table II in the Appendix.

⁸ *Supra*, p. 346.

⁹ Renouard, *Les Relations*, p. 59 and n. 57.

¹⁰ E. 101/127/25.

of the two firms receiving any remuneration from Despenser. Their sole benefit apparently consisted in having at their disposal in England large sums of cash, especially needed for purchase of wool, which was the chief commercial object of Italian firms in England. For the same reason Italian firms eagerly competed for the privilege of transferring papal revenues to Avignon, for which they were similarly not paid, apart from compensation for the expenses of the transfer and of the exchange of currencies.¹ There is no evidence that Despenser even compensated the Bardi for their losses in an exchange transaction made with them, though the evidence on this point is not conclusive.² It is also possible that he may have given informal gifts to members of the two firms who had served him, such as the King gave from time to time,³ but this is pure conjecture. The advantages of enjoying the protection of the King's leading adviser were also considerable, especially in a turbulent period like the reign of Edward II.

In the last years of his life Despenser may have been the most important English depositor with Italian firms. The accidental way in which the evidence of his dealings with the Bardi and the Peruzzi has survived is a good warning, if any were needed, of how impossible it is to reach any sure conclusions about the extent to which the practice of depositing money with Italian merchant-bankers prevailed among contemporary magnates and prelates. I have an impression, though it can be no more, that in the middle and later years of the reign of Edward II only a minority of the leading men of the kingdom habitually kept deposits with Italian financiers. Occasional dealings with them, to arrange transfers of money abroad, may have been more frequent, especially in the case of ecclesiastics sending money to the papal court,⁴ and some of the English merchants who traded to foreign countries may have regularly used them in settling their obligations, but into this we cannot here enter.

The list of nobles and prelates, other than Despenser, who are known to have entrusted their money to Italian firms in the period under discussion is not long. An account roll of Henry de Lacy,⁵ Earl of Lincoln, surviving because of the confiscation in 1322 of the estates of his son-in-law and heir, Thomas of Lancaster,⁶ suggests that around 1305 he may have kept deposits with the Frecobaldi.⁷ Walter Langton, Bishop of Lichfield and the trusted treasurer of Edward I, had deposits with the Bellardi of Lucca,⁸ and the Frescobaldi are known to have received money on his behalf in 1304;⁹ we owe this information to the fact that Edward II, on succeeding his father in 1307, imprisoned Langton and seized his property. The proceedings following the flight of the Pulci and Rimbartini from England provide some further evidence. Among their creditors in 1306 we find Humphrey, Earl of Hereford, and his wife, Elizabeth, Lady Isabella de

¹ Renouard, *Les Relations*, pp. 512-47.

² *Supra*, p. 349.

³ For examples of such gifts see Fryde, *op. cit.* p. 135, n. 1; E. Russell, 'The Societies of the Bardi and the Peruzzi and their Dealings with Edward III, 1327-45' in *Finance and Trade under Edward III*, ed. G. Unwin (Manchester, 1918), p. 116.

⁴ Cal. Close Rolls 1323-7, p. 545. For particular examples see *Register of Henry Woodlock, Bishop of Winchester* (ed. Canterbury and York Society), XLIV, 680-1 (1308); *Register of Robert Winchelsea, Archbishop of Canterbury* (ed. Canterbury and York Society), pp. 1052-3 (1309); *Register of Haymo of Hethe, Bishop of Rochester* (ed. Canterbury and York Society), pp. 84-5 (1320).

⁵ Duchy of Lancaster, Ministers' Accounts, D.L. 29/1/2.

⁶ J. F. Baldwin, 'Household Administration of Henry Lacy and Thomas of Lancaster', *Eng. Hist. Rev.* (1927), XLII, 195.

⁷ *Infra*, p. 357.

⁸ Exchequer Plea Roll, E. 13/31 (proceedings concerning the property of Walter Langton), m. 36d.

⁹ *Ibid.* m. 4.

Vescy, Sir Guy Ferre, twice seneschal of Gascony, and Adam de Osgodby, one of the leading chancery clerks.¹ While we cannot be certain that all these debts arose out of deposits, there is explicit evidence that money had been deposited with this firm by magnates, merchants and other persons in the realm.² Several chroniclers allege, probably with truth, that Peter de Gaveston, Earl of Cornwall, who was killed in 1312, employed foreign merchants extensively to transfer treasure abroad.³ The fact that the Peruzzi paid in November 1324 through the Bardi £300 due from Despenser to Thomas, Earl of Norfolk, suggests that at this date the Earl used the Bardi as his bankers.⁴ After the execution in 1326 of Despenser's father, Hugh, Earl of Winchester, the Bardi paid to the king £300 which they had owed to the Earl at the moment of his death.⁵ We cannot be wholly certain that this debt originated with deposits, but even if it did, there is other evidence to show that the Earl was storing in 1326 large sums of money in his manors and in friendly religious houses,⁶ which makes it improbable that he could have kept extensive deposits with Italian financiers. After the death in 1331 of Henry de Eastry, the business-like prior of Christ Church, Canterbury, his successor was claiming from the Bardi Eastry's deposit of 100 marks; the smallness of this sum and the wording of the request do not suggest that Eastry's deposits had been very important,⁷ and his successor certainly does not appear to have thought that the practice was worth continuing, except as a method of transferring money due to the priory in France.⁸ Finally, a letter of 28 June 1308 preserved in the register of Henry Woodlock, Bishop of Winchester, by which he asks the White Cerchi of Florence to make a payment of 70 marks to the papal collector in England and to pay 25 marks for him at the papal court,⁹ suggests that he may have been in regular financial relations with this firm, but it does not necessarily prove that he had deposits with them and the requested payments may have been loans; in 1311 we find the Bishop borrowing money from Florentine merchants.¹⁰ Search of such registers of the contemporary bishops as are readily available in print has revealed no other clear cases of deposits.

Detailed information is available only concerning the deposits of Walter Langton, Bishop of Lichfield.¹¹ As Edward I's treasurer during the last 12 years of the reign and virtually the King's chief minister during this period¹² he was, of course, brought into specially close contact with Italian financiers. It is indeed not always easy to separate his dealings with them in his official capacity from his private financial transactions, and some of the money that the Bellardi admitted in 1307 to have received from him may have been delivered to them in pursuance of royal business.¹³ The Bellardi recognized that at the time of Langton's disgrace they were accountable to him for deposits totalling £2120. 18s. 3d., though they claimed that allowance should be granted them inside that sum for various disbursements made on Langton's behalf, including

¹ Cal. Pat. Rolls 1307-13, p. 84, C. 47/13/1, no. 25, and E. 101/127/5, no. 22.

² Cal. Pat. Rolls 1301-7, p. 448

³ Conway-Davies, *op. cit.* p. 100 and n. 3.

⁴ E. 101/127/17.

⁵ Cal. Pat. Rolls 1327-30, p. 27.

⁶ *Infra*, p. 358.

⁷ *Litterae Cantuarienses* (ed. J. B. Sheppard, Rolls Series, 1887), 1, 402-4, 426-7, 460-2 and 470-2.

⁸ *Ibid.* and pp. 424-5, 452-4, 462.

⁹ *Register of Henry Woodlock*, pp. 680-1.

¹⁰ *Ibid.* pp. 686, 688.

¹¹ E. 13/31, m. 36d. (Exchequer proceedings against the Bellardi), m. 31d., and 4 and E. 101/127/25. The account that follows is based on the record on m. 36d. unless otherwise indicated.

¹² Tout, *Chapters*, II, 13.

¹³ For example the Bellardi received from Langton at the exchequer on 25 January 1305 a sum of 1000 marks which they lent to the Bishop of Durham.

the cost of work done at Paris on a shrine of St Chad, presumably destined for Langton's cathedral church, and the expenses of the education of his nephews at Paris.¹ Besides deposits by himself or through his officials, Langton, like Despenser, employed his bankers to collect debts due to him.² His deposits with the Bellardi included also silver plate valued at £209. 1s. 11d.

The evidence concerning deposits of Henry de Lacy, Earl of Lincoln (d. 1311), another leading adviser of Edward I during his later years, is far less definite. His only surviving account roll, covering the year 1305, records a number of dealings with Italian merchants.³ Some of them refer to purchases of furs and other articles, but the account of the receiver of the Earl's household mentions also three sums of money received by him from the Frescobaldi of Florence (£769. 10s.), the Spini of Florence (£66. 13s. 4d.) and the Bellardi of Lucca (£41. 14s. 6d.). Prof. Baldwin assumed them to be loans, and considered this to be 'the only surprising feature' of the account roll which otherwise conveys a picture of solvency and very efficient administration.⁴ The two smaller payments by the Bellardi and the Spini probably do in fact represent loans, as identical sums, described as the Earl's debts, were repaid to these two societies by the Earl's receiver of Bolingbroke.⁵ The entry concerning repayment to the Spini runs 'Et 66 li. 13s. 4d. soluti [blank] Mercatori de Florencia de societate de Spine in quibus comes sibi et sociis suis tenebatur per litteram obligatoriam qua redditur super compotum.' The entry concerning the payment to the Bellardi is identical in wording except that the last two words are omitted and that it ends therefore 'per litteram obligatoriam qua redditur'. The receiver of Bolingbroke likewise paid £866. 13s. 4d. to the Frescobaldi, but the wording is markedly different and appears to point to a deposit with their society: 'Et 866 li. 13s. 4d. soluti Paulo de Gane, Mercatori de Florencia de Societate Friskynbaldorum per quinque literas suas obligatorias que remanent apud Bolingbrok' [*italics mine*]. The five letters obligatory thus appear to have been given by the Frescobaldi, presumably, if my interpretation is correct, pledging them to the repayment of the money deposited, and the fact that they were preserved at Bolingbroke, the chief centre of the Earl's household in England in that year,⁶ instead of being surrendered by the receiver with other documents in the course of his account before the Earl's auditors, strengthens the case for supposing that we are dealing here with deposits. In the same year the receiver of Pontefract paid £442. 16s. 8d. to the Frescobaldi on the Earl's orders. We have thus in this account roll evidence of deposits totalling £1309. 9s. 4d., partly balanced by withdrawals to finance the Earl's household amounting to £769. 10s.

The evidence for a view that only a minority of magnates habitually held deposits with Italian financiers in the period under discussion must, in the nature of the case, be mainly negative. The value of this negative evidence depends on the extent to which the available sources of information could be reasonably expected to have contained mentions of deposits, if such deposits had existed.

¹ E. 13/31, m. 36d.: 'tam de quoddam feretro sancti Cedde quod ipsi mercatores suis sumptibus et expensis fieri fecerunt paris' ad opus ipsius episcopi et de expensis nepotum suorum ibidem in scolis existencium.' The London branch of the Bellardi did not know how much the payments made in Paris totalled (E. 101/127/25).

² E. 13/31, m. 31d.

³ D.L. 29/1/2.

⁴ Baldwin, *op. cit.* p. 189.

⁵ D.L. 29/1/2. I owe thanks to Miss D. Oschinsky for drawing my attention to the existence of this further evidence of dealings with Italian financiers in the accounts of the local receivers of the Earl.

⁶ Baldwin, *op. cit.* p. 186.

Material of this kind is unusually abundant for the period 1321-6. Five earls, Lancaster, Hereford, Carlisle, Winchester and Arundel, were executed during these years and had their property confiscated and the same fate, or imprisonment and forfeiture of property, befell a number of barons, including some of the wealthiest and most important members of the baronage. We possess accounts of the officials responsible for the seizure and administration of the confiscated properties, records of inquisitions held about them, inventories of valuables, including stores of coined money belonging to the fallen magnates, lists of muniments in their possession and other evidence connected with these confiscations.

The absence from all these records, with two exceptions,¹ of mentions of deposits with financiers may possibly reflect the non-existence of such deposits, though it cannot, of course, constitute a conclusive proof. The contrast that some of these records reveal between the financial arrangements of the younger Despenser and of magnates associated with him, like his father and the Earl of Arundel, is specially instructive. None of the records concerning the two confiscations suffered by the younger Despenser, one in 1321 and the other in 1326, mentions storage of treasure by him,² which in view of his large deposits with Florentine firms is not surprising; in November 1321, while he was still in exile, the Bardi were keeping for him £1787.³ On the other hand, his father kept in 1321 bonds, muniments, valuables and £1000 in money, in coffers stored in the abbey of Stanley, in Wiltshire.⁴ In 1326 the older Despenser possessed £1800 at his chief manor of Loughborough, which in the last desperate days before his fall he tried to remove to the abbey of Leicester.⁵ A trusted agent of his held £1000 in Wiltshire, where many of his estates were situated,⁶ and he had also stored treasure at the abbey of Gerndon in Leicestershire⁷ and at a religious house in Surrey.⁸ If he also had deposits with the Bardi, as their debt to him of £300 may suggest,⁹ they appear to have represented only a small part of his total resources. As for Arundel, £524. 2s. 8d. belonging to him were confiscated in the cathedral church of Chichester, together with plate valued at £51. 16s. 8d.¹⁰

In dealing with the problem of the private financial arrangements of the leading 'contrarians' who suffered confiscation in 1321-2, there is a political factor that must be taken into consideration. It is conceivable that in a period of active opposition to the Crown some of them may have felt it undesirable to keep their money with Italian firms closely connected with the Crown and with

¹ One of them concerns the Earl of Winchester and has been discussed above. For the other, concerning the Earl of Lancaster, see below.

² His losses in 1321 are listed in Cal. Close Rolls 1318-23, pp. 541-2. His estates in 1326 and the goods found on them are enumerated in a 'valor' of his estates and those of his father and Arundel compiled at the exchequer after their death (K.R. Ancient Extents, E. 142/33). Many of the inquisitions on which it is based still survive. Plate of younger Despenser valued at £124. 2s. 7d. was delivered to the King in December 1326 by the keeper of Despenser's wardrobe in the Tower of London (Cal. Pat. Rolls. 1324-7, pp. 339-40).

³ E. 101/127/31, m. 1.

⁴ Cal. Close Rolls 1318-23, p. 544.

⁵ E. 142/33, m. 10, and E. 142/59, no. 4 (the original inquisition at Loughborough).

⁶ E. 142/33, m. 5.

⁷ Cal. Close Rolls 1327-30, p. 121.

⁸ E. 142/33, m. 3.

⁹ Cal. Pat. Rolls 1327-30, p. 27.

¹⁰ E. 142/33, m. 3d.; Chancery Miscellanea, C. 47/3/53, no. 7 and Cal. Pat. Rolls 1324-27, p. 339. Various goods of Arundel, but including apparently no money, were confiscated in Arundel Castle (E. 142/57, no. 5) and his treasure in the Priory of Holy Trinity, London, was plundered by the Londoners (*Chronicles of Edward I and Edward II* (ed. W. Stubbs, Rolls Series, 1882), I, 321). Queen Isabella seized in 1326 a sum of £800 kept in Bury St Edmunds by Hervey de Staunton, the retired Chief Justice (Cal. Close Rolls 1327-30, p. 189; I owe this reference to Dr E. L. G. Stones).

royal favourites like Despenser. There were, of course, other Italian firms in the country besides the Bardi and the Peruzzi and the whole argument is purely conjectural, but it does constitute a warning that the apparent absence of deposits belonging to the leading opposition magnates may have had temporary and political causes. Thomas, Earl of Lancaster, the chief enemy of Edward II, may be a case in point. He inherited the estates of Henry de Lacy, Earl of Lincoln, who, as we have attempted to show, probably had kept considerable deposits with the Frescobaldi. Lancaster's only surviving account roll, for 1314,¹ which was found among his muniments confiscated in 1322,² contains however no references to deposits with Italian financiers, though it does mention purchases of cloth and jewels from the Bardi to the value of £107. os. 2d., and refers also to the sale of 20 sacks 20 stones of the Earl's wool from the Peak flock in Derbyshire to two Florentine merchants. The only other piece of evidence that can be discovered is a mention in a list of Lancaster's deeds discovered in 1322 at Tutbury and Pontefract³ of an indenture of mutual acquittance between the Earl and the Bardi,⁴ resembling the general indentures of acquittance made by Despenser with the Bardi and the Peruzzi on conclusion of accounts with them, and running as follows: 'Item une endenture fait entre le dit counte et Boon Phelip et ses compaignons marchands de Barde par quele chescun clama autre quit de totes maners accions de prestz et de totes autres choses.' The date of this document cannot be precisely determined, and while the reference to loans is interesting we cannot be certain whether this refers only to loans by the Bardi to the earl or extends also to 'loans' by the earl to the merchants, this being one of the usual ways of describing deposits.⁵ In any case, it does not appear very likely that he had any deposits with the Bardi in 1322, for we would have probably heard of their confiscation by Edward II.

Much of the evidence on the subject of deposits with Italian financiers lurks in unusual and often unexpected places, and a good deal may still be awaiting future discovery. The partly negative results of the present survey should not in any case overshadow the importance of the fact that the practice of entrusting money on deposit to Italian firms was quite familiar to a number of leading English magnates of this period, especially those closely connected with the royal administration. In the cases of Hugh Despenser and Walter Langton, and perhaps also of the Earl of Lincoln, the sums deposited were large enough to constitute an important addition to the resources of the English branches of the firms concerned, especially valuable because likely to be regularly recurrent over a number of years. In trying to reconstruct in as great detail as possible Despenser's dealings with his bankers we have given what probably represents a fairly typical picture of how the system of deposit worked in the period under discussion. Despenser's deposits were unusually large, but in their purpose, the way in which they were made, disbursed and controlled, they probably resembled the deposits of other magnates and prelates.

University College of Wales, Aberystwyth

¹ D.L. 29/1/3.

² Baldwin, *op. cit.* p. 195.

³ Duchy of Lancaster Miscellanea, D.L. 41/1/37. This and two similar records, D.L. 41/1, nos. 35 and 36 (no. 36 appears to be a later copy of a part of no. 37) are discussed by J. F. Baldwin, 'The Chancery of the Duchy of Lancaster', *Bull. Inst. Hist. Res.* iv, 133-5.

⁴ D.L. 41/1/37, m. 7.

⁵ For examples, see Cal. Pat. Rolls 1301-7, p. 448: 'money lent to them [the Pulci and Rimbertyni] by magnates, merchants and others', *Litterae Cantuarienses*, I, 460-2 and 470-2: 'qe nostre predecessour vous presta.'

APPENDIX

Table 1. *The account of Hugh le Despenser the Younger with the Peruzzi, 1322-6.**

Date	Deposits by Despenser		Person depositing on Despenser's behalf	Withdrawals by Despenser		Balance £ s. d.
	Amount £ s. d.	Amount £ s. d.		Purpose of Withdrawal		
1 Jan. 1322	1066 13 4	—	William de Cusance, his clerk	—	—	1066 13 4
25 Mar. 1324	389 11 2	—	William de Cusance, his clerk	—	—	1456 4 6
26 Mar. 1324	—	400 0 0	—	Loan to Despenser's father	—	1056 4 6
25 Apr. 1324	500 0 0	—	William le Blund, his 'garderober'	—	—	1556 4 6
12 June 1324	1000 0 0	—	His receiver at Bristol	—	—	2556 4 6
1 Aug. 1324	1000 0 0	—	The same and Will. le Blund	—	—	3556 4 6
29 Sept. 1324	20 0 0	—	William le Blund	—	—	3576 4 6
25 Oct. 1324	66 13 4	—	Lord John Botetourt	—	—	3642 17 10
26 Oct. 1324	—	100 0 0	—	Loan to Abbot of Waltham	—	—
29 Oct. 1324	—	10 0 0	—	Sir Nicholas de Sodyngton	—	3532 17 10
31 Oct. 1324	—	40 0 0	—	Loan to Constantine Mortimer, his knight	—	3492 17 10
1 Nov. 1324	—	444 7 6	—	Payment to Despenser at Westminster	—	3048 10 4
6 Nov. 1324	100 0 0	1000 0 0	Roger Northburgh, Bishop of Chester, of debt	Payment to Despenser at Westminster	—	2048 10 4
14 Nov. 1324	46 0 0	—	The same	—	—	2148 10 4
18 Nov. 1324	—	299 19 2	—	Payment to Despenser	—	1894 11 2
1 Dec. 1324†	—	300 0 0	—	Payment to Earl of Norfolk for a lease	—	1594 11 2
3 Dec. 1324	—	133 6 8†	—	Loan to Earl of Richmond	—	1461 4 6
Between December 1324 and October 1326	—	1000 0 0	—	Payment to Despenser at Porchester	—	461 4 6

* All the information is derived from the account with the Peruzzi, E. 101/127/17, unless otherwise indicated. In the column for balances italics have been used to indicate overdraft.

† E. 101/127/5, nos. 20 and 21.

‡ My calculations based on E. 101/127/17, and Cal. Pat. Rolls 1334-8, p. 343, and taking into account the payment of £133. 6s. 8d. to the Earl of Richmond on 1 December 1324.

N	Date of payment	Amount paid		Recipient of the money	Purpose of payment and remarks	Sources
		£	s. d.			
	26 Mar. 1324	400	0 0	Earl of Winchester	Loan to Despenser's father	E. 101/127/17
	26 Oct. 1324	100	0 0	Abbot of Waltham	Loan, to be repaid at Easter 1325	Ibid. and C.C.R. 1323-7, p. 319
	26 Oct. 1324	10	0 0	Nicholas de Sodyngton	—	E. 101/127/17
	29 Oct. 1324	40	0 0	Constantine Mortimer	Loan	E. 101/127/17 and C.C.R. 1323-7, p. 320
	31 Oct. 1324	444	7 6	Hugh le Despenser	Paid at Westminster in florins of Florence	E. 101/127/17
	1 Nov. 1324	1000	0 0	Hugh le Despenser	Paid at Westminster in florins of Florence	E. 101/127/17
	14 Nov. 1324	299	19 2	Hugh le Despenser	Paid in florins 'al Agnel'	E. 101/127/17
	18 Nov. 1324	300	0 0	Earl of Norfolk	In part payment of £300 due for lease of his property West of the Severn	E. 101/127/17, C.C.R. 1323-7, p. 168, C.P.R. 1324-7, p. 52, E. 101/332/27
	1 Dec. 1324	133	6 8	Earl of Richmond	Loan, to be repaid at Michaelmas 1325	E. 101/127/5, nos. 20 and 21
	3 Dec. 1324	1000	0 0	Hugh le Despenser	Paid at Porchester in florins of Florence	E. 101/127/17
	12 Dec. 1324	5	0 0	John de Wymundeswold	Despenser's wardrobe in the Tower of London	E. 101/127/19, nos. 1 and 2
	28 Jan. 1325	100	0 0	Abbot of Leicester	Loan, to be repaid at Michaelmas 1325	E. 101/127/5, no. 27 and E. 159/113, Recorda, Hilary, m. 3d.
	Mar. 1325	51	13 4	Adam Box, draper of London	Purchase of cloth for his knights	E. 101/127/22, no. 25
	[6] Mar. 1325	40	0 0	Abbot of Tintern	Loan, to be repaid on 30 Nov. 1325	E. 101/127/5, nos. 28 and 29
	21 Mar. 1325	16	13 4	Anthony Citeron of Genoa	Purchase of crossbows	E. 101/127/22, nos. 21 and 22
	2 May 1325	50	0 0	William Davy	Debt	E. 101/127/22, nos. 8, 9, 10
	3 May 1325	66	13 4	Isabella de Hastings	Loan to Despenser's sister	E. 101/127/5, nos. 3 and 4
	10 May 1325	30	0 0	Robert de Welles	Loan to Despenser's 'bachelor'	E. 101/127/5, nos. 5 and 6
	18 June 1325	23	11 9½	Thomas of Castle Goderich	Purchase of armour by him	E. 101/127/20, nos. 1 and 2
	17 July 1325	100	0 0	Robert de Wodehouse, keeper of the king's wardrobe	Loan	E. 101/127/5, no. 35 and C.C.R. 1323-7, p. 493
	25 Aug. 1325	37	8 2	John de Wymundeswold	Purchase of furs and saddles	E. 101/127/19, nos. 3 and 4
	Late Aug. 1325	26	9 0	John de Gode, his valet	For Despenser's wife and for purchase of spices	E. 101/127/5, nos. 36, 37, 38
	16 Oct. 1325	1000	0 0	Richard de Nateby, his clerk	—	Anc. Corr. 49, nos. 146, 146a
	8 Nov. 1325	40	0 0	William de Culpho	For the wardrobe of Despenser's wife	E. 101/127/22, nos. 2, 3, 4
	30 Nov. 1325	20	0 0	William de Culpho	For the wardrobe of Despenser's wife	E. 101/127/22, nos. 5, 6
	Late Nov. 1325	100	0 0	Abbot of Hayles	Loan	E. 101/127/21, no. 22
	2 Dec. 1325	20	0 0	William Lovel	Loan to Despenser's 'bachelor'	Anc. Corr. 49, no. 149 and C.C.R. 1323-7, p. 528

Table II (*cont.*).

Date of payment	Amount paid		Recipient of the money	Purpose of payment and remarks	Sources
	£	s. d.			
3 Dec. 1325	13	6 8	Hugh de Turplington	Payment to Despenser's 'bachiler' for his military equipment	E. 101/127/22, nos. 11 and 12
5 Dec. 1325	40	0 0	Robert de Morley	Loan	Anc. Corr. 49, no. 148 and C.C.R. 1323-7, p. 529
6 Dec. 1325	104	0 0	Abbot of Waltham Holy Cross	Loan	Anc. Corr. 49, no. 147
11 Dec. 1325	66	13 4	Thomas of Castle Goderich, his clerk		E. 101/127/20, nos. 3, 4
13 Dec. 1325	40	0 0	Thomas of Castle Goderich	For payment to Lady Eleanor de Maulay	E. 101/127/20, 5, 6
16 Dec. 1325	1000	0 0	Thomas of Castle Goderich	—	E. 101/127/20, nos. 7, 8
18 Dec. 1325	20	0 0	Walter de Beauchamp	Half his annual fee from Despenser	E. 101/127/22, nos. 13, 14
23 Jan. 1326	30	0 0	Robert de Bousser	Payment for a quitclaim of the manor of Oxindon (Glos.)	E. 101/127/22, nos. 15, 16
3 Feb. 1326	20	0 0	John de Snale	Loan to Despenser's official	E. 101/127/22, nos. 3, 4
Feb. 1326	10	0 0	Robert de Morley	Loan	Anc. Corr. 49, no. 150
Feb. 1326	20	0 0	—	For Despenser's castle of Caerphilly	E. 101/127/21, no. 19
2 Mar. 1326	20	0 0	Geoffrey de Rudham, his clerk	For taking carpenters to Caerphilly	Anc. Corr. 49, nos. 151, 151a
4 Mar. 1326	2	0 0	William de Hurle, carpenter	For repairs in Despenser's 'hostel' of New Temple	E. 101/127/21, nos. 5, 6
25 Mar. 1326	22	0 0	William de Chaillowe	For purchase of saddles	E. 101/127/21, nos. 7, 8
1 Apr. 1326	10	0 0	William Pickerell, saddler of London		E. 101/127/21, nos. 9, 10
7 Apr. 1326	93	6 8	Constantine Mortimer	His fee from Despenser	E. 101/127/21, nos. 23, 24
12 June 1326	90	19 4	John de Pulteney of London	For cloth purchased for Despenser's White sun livery	E. 101/127/19, nos. 5, 6
16 June 1326	66	13 4	Robert de Wateville	Loan	E. 101/127/21, nos. 1, 2
June 1326	20	0 0	Simon de Montbreton	Prest for his fee and for custody of Bristol castle	E. 101/127/21, nos. 11, 12
Before 21 July 1326	2	5 0	John de Trappe, skinner of London	For purchase of furs	E. 101/127/5, no. 34
17 July 1326	10	0 0	Richard Talbot, the nephew	Loan	E. 101/127/21, nos. 13, 14
22 July 1326	20	0 0	Simon de Shepeye, his 'garderober'	For payment to Despenser's officials going to Wales	E. 101/127/21, nos. 15, 16
25 July 1326	20	0 0	John de Ellerker	Loan to Despenser's official	E. 101/127/21, nos. 17, 18
16 Sept. 1326	2000	0 0	Hugh le Despenser	Paid at Porchester	E. 101/127/22, no. 7

THE LEDGER OF THOMAS HOWELL

By G. CONNELL-SMITH

AMONG the records of the Worshipful Company of the Drapers of London, preserved in the Drapers' Hall, is the ledger of Thomas Howell, a prosperous member of the company in the sixteenth century. The ledger contains an account of Howell's property and commercial transactions between the years 1517 and 1528. Although it was re-bound in 1913 the original vellum binding is still in the possession of the company, showing the merchant's mark on the outside cover which is repeated on the first folio. The Drapers are justly proud of this book, which they claim is the earliest known English example of the system of Double Entry Accounts.¹ An abstract of the ledger was included in a history of the company written some thirty years ago,² providing ample evidence of the value of this document to economic historians, and particularly to students of English overseas trade and the cloth industry in the sixteenth century, but so far it has aroused little interest in the ledger as an historical source. Thomas Howell's book is invaluable, however, for a study of Anglo-Spanish trade in the early Tudor period, since he spent over thirty years between London and Seville, and the greater part of the document was compiled in the Andalusian port. The historian of the company believed it probable that the ledger was brought from Seville with Howell's money in a chest now in the possession of the Drapers,³ but the merchant's last will shows that he had placed it in the Drapers' Hall before his death.⁴ Such a detailed account of his trade by a prosperous sixteenth-century English merchant is almost unique and furnishes a far more vivid picture of this branch of English commerce than it is possible to draw from surviving particulars of customs—or, indeed, from any other source available for the same period.⁵

The years covered by Howell's ledger represent a definite phase in the history of Anglo-Spanish commercial relations and were among the most prosperous for the English merchants trading to Spain in the Tudor period. When the ledger opens, Englishmen were again enjoying the full benefit of the aggressive commercial policy of Henry VII, after a temporary set-back during the last years of his reign; when it closes Henry VIII had already embarked upon a course of action which was to lead to the eventual breakdown of the trade. The vigorous support given by the first Tudor monarch to his subjects engaged in commerce with Spain has not yet been fully appreciated, but it was, undoubtedly, largely due to his efforts that men like Thomas Howell were able to become so wealthy

¹ This is of particular interest, because Howell compiled his ledger for the most part in Spain, which has been claimed as the birthplace of double-entry. Italian examples of this type of book-keeping, however, ante-date Howell's ledger by nearly two centuries. Cf. B. S. Yamey, 'Scientific Bookkeeping and the Rise of Capitalism', in *Econ. Hist. Rev.* (1949), 2nd Ser. I, 101.

² The Rev. A. H. Johnson, *The History of the Worshipful Company of the Drapers of London* (1915), II, 251.

³ *Ibid.* p. 257.

⁴ Somerset House, Prerogative Court of Canterbury Wills, 24 Alen.

⁵ The particulars of customs are especially unsatisfactory for the trade with Spain, because of the impossibility of separating Spanish and Portuguese cargoes. Not only were many of the same merchants engaged in both branches of English commerce with similar commodities, but the majority of ships visiting Andalusia called in at Lisbon on their way. A further complication arises from the increasing amount of Spanish trade by way of the Low Countries.

from the Spanish trade in the first part of the next reign. A study of commercial relations between England and Spain during the reign of Henry VII reveals that, although for many years he made political friendship with the Catholic kings the keystone of his foreign policy, Henry pursued a relentless commercial campaign at the expense of his allies. When he became king he found the Spanish merchants trading to England enjoying privileges exceeding those possessed by any other aliens except the Hansards. In consequence, a large proportion of the trade with Spain, especially from London,¹ was in their hands, and, even more detrimental to the realm, it was carried predominantly in Spanish bottoms.² At first Henry thought it politic to confirm these privileges,³ but after the Treaty of Medina del Campo he was able to revoke them under pretext of one of its clauses.⁴ The Spanish monarchs, whose ignorance of English customs duties had made this piece of trickery possible, tried for a long time to persuade Henry to observe the spirit rather than the letter of the clause in question, but without success.⁵ Henry VII's navigation acts were also detrimental to Spanish commercial interests, for they applied to the traffic in Toulouse woad and the wines of Guienne and Gascony, in which the Spaniards were particularly prominent at the beginning of the Tudor period.⁶

As a result of Henry's measures English merchants soon began to dominate the trade with Spain and took up residence there in increasing numbers. They were especially favoured in the port of San Lucar de Barrameda at the mouth of the Guadalquivir, where the Dukes of Medina Sidonia granted them privileges at an early date,⁷ and later the Andalusia Company had its headquarters. Englishmen also resided in other Andalusian ports and, in smaller numbers, in the Biscayan provinces. The animosity between Henry VII and Ferdinand in the last years of the English king and the increased influence of the Council of Castile after the death of Isabella led to the stricter application of the Spanish edicts against foreign shipping and other manifestations of anti-English feeling, but, with the accession of Henry VIII, Anglo-Spanish friendship was re-established. By the time Howell's ledger opens there was a growing number of wealthy English merchants living in Spain on the friendliest terms with the Spaniards, employing factors in all parts of the Spanish dominions and conducting business in close co-operation with Spanish subjects. Among the wealthier merchants attracted to Seville as the first port of Castile and centre of the trade to the New World was the London draper himself.

Thomas Howell had become a freeman of the Drapers' Company in the year 1506-7 through apprenticeship to William Roche, a prominent London

¹ P.R.O., K.R. Customs, 78/7 seq.

² Ibid. This is true even of Bristol where Englishmen almost completely monopolized the trade. Cf. P.R.O., K.R. Customs, 20/5 seq.

³ P.R.O., K.R. Memoranda Rolls, 262, Easter Term, m. 2.

⁴ Treaty of Medina del Campo, 27/28 March 1489, clause 1. Calendar of State Papers, Spain, 1485-1509, no. 34. This stated that customs duties were to be reduced to rates current thirty years earlier. In fact, Edward IV had made concessions to the Spaniards since then which Henry now promptly cancelled.

⁵ Ibid. nos. 41, 60, 91, 158, etc. G. Schanz, *Englische Handelspolitik gegen Ende des Mittelalters* (1881), I, 274, states that Henry gave way. He based this assertion on an undated list of the rates of customs which N. S. B. Gras reproduces in *The Early English Customs System* (1918), p. 690. This list, showing Spaniards paying the same rates as Englishmen, must be prior to 1489, however, because the particulars of customs prove conclusively that after that date Spaniards paid alien rates throughout this period.

⁶ P.R.O., K.R. Customs, 78/7 seq.

⁷ This is evident from the grant of 1517 which makes reference to privileges given to the English merchants by former Dukes. B.M., Harleian MSS., 36, f. 43.

merchant, who was mayor in 1540.¹ It is possible, however, that he came originally from Bristol, for he traded a great deal through the Gloucester port and left money in his will for charitable purposes there. Moreover, in his ledger he refers to Hugh Elliott of Bristol as his former master.² Elliott traded to Spain during the reigns of Henry VII and Henry VIII,³ and his name occurs from time to time in Howell's accounts. He is perhaps better known as one of the early Bristol pioneers of voyages of discovery whom Robert Thorne mentioned as an associate of his father in his famous letter to Dr Lee, the English ambassador in Spain, in 1527.⁴ In June 1528, Howell stated that he had been in Spain on and off for some twenty-six years.⁵ The reference to Hugh Elliott 'that was my maister a my comyng'⁶ suggests that he may have been employed in Spain as a factor when he first went out there. At all events, by the time the ledger opens, Thomas Howell was firmly established in Seville on his own account, which is amply clear from the list of outstanding debts owing to him at the beginning of his book.

It is hardly surprising that Howell's trade, as revealed in his ledger, is primarily concerned with the cloth industry. Cloths of all kinds were his exports from England, and dyestuffs, oil and soap for the home industry were prominent among his imports. The ledger is indeed a mine of information about the cloth industry in the early Tudor period. It shows not only the different kinds of cloths and the prices at which Howell bought and sold them, but also their place of origin and the clothiers who supplied them. Howell handled cloths at different stages of production. There are many references showing that he purchased unfinished cloths and had them barbed, folded, pressed, sheared and dyed in England. The name of Thomas Pettor 'my sherman' occurs frequently:

Thomas Pettor / scherman of London / owzt to have / in rowyng and sheryng
of / iiij long clothis / as it apereth in my boke of copis of yor owne hond wrettyng
—1 li.⁷

So does that of Thomas Hicks, the London dyer, who was usually paid by Howell for his services partly in alum and dyestuffs.

Howell's preoccupation with the cloth industry reflects the general character of the trade between England and Spain at this time. Cloth was by far the most important English export to Spain, while dyestuffs and other commodities necessary to the processes of finished cloth production were prominent among the imports from that country. An analysis of the particulars of customs of Bristol for the year of the earliest entries in Howell's ledger reveals that 70 % of all the cloths exported from the port during the year 1517-18 went to Spain. After iron (which Howell himself imported into England in considerable quantities) and wine (in which he dealt very little), oil, alum, soap and woad were the chief imports from Spain into Bristol.⁸ These commodities formed Howell's most frequent shipments from Andalusia. Spain was already one of the chief secondary markets for the sale of English cloth on the continent. The English cloth merchants were greatly assisted by the encouragement given by Ferdinand and Isabella to the aggressive promotion of wool exports by the Mesta

¹ Johnson, op. cit. p. 44.

² The ledger, f. 31 v.

³ P.R.O., K.R. Customs, 20/9, 199/1, 199/2, etc.

⁴ Richard Hakluyt, *The Principal Voyages* (Maclehose ed.), II, 178.

⁵ Vide infra.

⁶ The ledger, f. 31 v.

⁷ Ibid. f. 22.

⁸ P.R.O., K.R. Customs, 199/2. It is only for a few years that sufficient details are given in the particulars of customs of Bristol for such an analysis to be possible. It is not possible for any other port.

leaders which, according to Julius Klein, 'became the keynote of the commercial programme of those royal devotees of mercantilism'.¹ Although the Spanish monarchs confirmed the edict of the Cortes of Castile of 1462 making concessions to the cloth industry, the interests of the latter were in fact subordinated to those of the wool trade. Thus the importation of foreign cloths was encouraged at first, and it was not until after the death of Isabella that Ferdinand took any steps to assist the development of a native woollen cloth industry.² Little had been done by the time of Howell's ledger.

Thomas Howell's book is a particularly important source for the economic historian for the information it furnishes concerning a Tudor merchant's relations with his numerous factors in various ports and their place in his overall business organization. Howell, who lived in the parish of Santa Maria in Seville, had agents in England, northern Spain, Andalusia and Hispaniola. He was thus concerned in all three branches of Anglo-Spanish trade, the Biscayan and Andalusian in Spain itself and the New World, through the privileged Spanish port of Seville. The merchants employed by him as factors in Spain are themselves interesting figures in the history of the trade during the early Tudor period, while most of the leading English merchants in those parts are shown by the ledger to have had business dealings with Howell. Thomas Malliard, Howell's factor in Seville, was one of the first Englishmen to take part in the trade to the Indies, and records of his business are contained in the registers of the public notaries of the city in the early years of Henry VIII's reign.³ Soap and oil were the chief commodities Malliard bought for Howell with the proceeds from the sale of his cloth. It appears that he often tried to defraud the draper. On 13 May 1521, for example, Malliard charged Howell 1200 *maravedís* per quintal for white soap which he had laden on the ship of a certain Walter Tomson. But, Howell admonished him, 'yt cost yow but 960 *marvedís* the kyntall as be yor ownne boke dothe apere and as I cann prove off the marchaunt ye bowght yt off'.⁴ Reference is made in the same month to the purchase of 100 ducats' worth of soap in Seville which had subsequently been sold in London at 20s. 'the hundred', showing a profit of 18 ducats or just over £4.⁵ If the cost had been 240 *maravedís* per quintal less than Malliard had stated, however, Howell's eventual profit was over £8. 10s. It is of interest that although he most often records his transactions in ducats or *maravedís*, Howell converts them into sterling in his columns. His rates for conversion were 375 *maravedís* to the ducat and 1000 to 12s. sterling. The ducat he reckoned to be worth approximately 4s. 6d. and the silver *real* 5d. Thomas Bedforth handled similar cargoes on Howell's behalf at Cadiz. From his account we gain details of the purchase and lading of oil. Four tuns 'clere aboard' the vessel taking them to England cost Howell 42,290 *maravedís* or about £25. 7s. 6d.⁶ Twelve tuns of oil purchased for 138,996 *maravedís* (£83. 8s.) cost 12,000 *maravedís* (£7. 4s.) to get aboard ship.⁷ Freight charges, English customs duties and services on their arrival in England would be paid for by Howell's agent there. According to the ledger, Howell usually sold oil in England at £12 or more per tun.⁸ The draper also employed a Spanish broker, Alonso de la Lonja of Seville, to conduct his business in Andalusia.

¹ *The Mesta, A Study in Spanish Economic History, 1273-1836* (1920), p. 37.

² *Ibid.*

³ Archivo de Protocolos de Sevilla, *Oficio* xv, 1509, *Libro* 1, f. 724 v, etc.

⁴ The ledger, f. 13 v.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *Ibid.*, f. 14.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ *Ibid.* f. 2 v, etc.

In northern Spain English merchants were less well established than in Andalusia, for the Biscayans took a much more active part than the Andalusians in Anglo-Spanish trade, providing much of the shipping in which it was carried. This was also true of the trade between Spain and the Low Countries¹ with which the commerce with England was now intimately connected. Howell employed as his representative in the northern provinces Thomas Batcock, probably the best established and most influential Englishman in those parts for he was frequently employed by the English government both as a merchant and as a political agent.² Batcock resided in La Renteria, a small town between San Sebastian and the French frontier. He had perhaps married in Spain, for he said on one occasion that none of his children could write English³ and he had a relation in the service of a member of Charles V's council.⁴ Iron was by far the most important commodity Batcock shipped to England on Howell's behalf. It was in great demand there at this time because of the bellicose policy of Henry VIII⁵ and the particulars of customs to which reference has been made show that it was by far the biggest import from Spain into Bristol in the year of the first entries in the ledger. Batcock's account with Howell reveals that he bought iron at prices ranging from approximately £3. 10s. to £4. 10s. per ton 'clere aboard' ship⁶ and that it was sold in England at prices up to £6 per ton.⁷ Batcock also purchased woad in smaller quantities, usually, like iron, 'in trocke of cloth'. Communication between English merchants in northern and southern Spain was maintained through the ships passing between England and the Iberian peninsula, and Batcock sent both money and goods to Howell by English merchants calling in at the Biscayan ports on their way to Andalusia.⁸

Robert Lesse, another London draper, was Howell's factor in England. Lesse took possession of the cargoes from Andalusia and Biscay arriving in London and shipped the cloths he bought for Howell from the capital. Although the costs in Spain are nearly always given 'clere aboard' full details of the expenses of unloading in London are often shown in Lesse's account.⁹ There was an intimate connexion between the goods Lesse received from Andalusia and those he shipped out there, for the clothiers and cloth finishers with whom Howell dealt were paid partly in alum, woad, grain and other Spanish commodities necessary to the home industry. The complementary nature of Howell's Andalusian trade is one of its main features for he seems to have dealt very little in wine, fruits and other produce of southern Spain. His trade with Biscay was almost exclusively in iron, for Spanish iron was in great demand as long as Henry VIII was determined to take an active part in the Hapsburg-Valois struggle. The commerce with Spain, as illustrated by Howell's ledger, was thus in necessities and not a luxury trade. Howell's wife, Joanna, seems to have been in England during the greater part of the period covered by the ledger and Lesse paid to her from time to time the money he obtained from the sale of her husband's goods. The most common entry on the credit side of Lesse's account is a payment to 'my wyfe be taylle'. Lesse employed brokers at Howell's expense to make the sales, as the other agents did, and the main responsibility of the factors was the shipping and unloading of Howell's goods and keeping records of transactions made on his behalf.

¹ Cf. J. A. Goris, *Étude sur Les Colonies Marchandes Méridionales (Portugais, Espagnols, Italiens) à Anvers de 1488 à 1567* (1925), p. 57.

² Letters and Papers of Henry VIII, II (ii), nos. 4108, 4165, etc.

³ Ibid. IX, no. 33.

⁴ Ibid. XII (i), no. 873.

⁵ Batcock had a culverin made for the King at Fuenterrabia in 1518. Ibid. II, no. 4108.

⁶ The ledger, ff. 77 v-82.

⁷ Ibid. f. 82 v.

⁸ Ibid. ff. 15, 78, 79.

⁹ Ibid. ff. 34-36, f. 53 v, etc.

Howell's relationship with the men conducting his business is of great importance. He describes them all as 'my factor', a term which might seem to imply that he had the exclusive use of their services, but this was certainly not so. Lesse, Malliard, Batcock and Bedfordth were all merchants on their own account. Their relationship with Howell was known in Spain as a *compañía*, a term loosely applied at this time to a wide variety of business partnerships.¹ Howell's factors were, in effect, commission agents; indeed, the ledger tells us that their 'provision', as Howell calls it, was usually $2\frac{1}{2}\%$.² The employment of commission agents seems to have been a common practice of the merchants conducting business with Spain in the early Tudor period, although we have record of prosperous English merchants sending their sons³ and even promising young men of little experience to Spain as factors.⁴ It was obviously more advantageous to employ established merchants with experience of Spanish business methods and good connexions in Spain to handle merchandise on a commission basis. A number of cases in the High Court of Admiralty concerned with this very question show that many of the English merchants in Spain handled the goods of others as well as their own.⁵ The notarial records in Spain bear out statements made in the English sources.⁶ An aggravation of the difficulties caused to the English merchants by the activities of the Spanish Inquisition in the late 1530's was the confiscation of all goods in the possession of any one of them arrested on a charge of heresy.⁷ Many more merchants were thus affected than those remaining in Spain during that difficult period.

Another important branch of Howell's trade in Spain was with the Indies. In common with most of the wealthy English merchants in Seville, Howell traded to the New World in accordance with the privileges granted to Englishmen by the treaties between England and Spain. The *Archivo de Protocolos de Sevilla*, in which there are numerous references to Howell's transactions,⁸ contains a great deal of evidence of this trade, but in Howell's ledger is to be found the only record of an Englishman sending goods to America in this period so far discovered in an English source. Hakluyt's reference to a surreptitious trade and the presence of a secret factor of Nicholas Thorne in Hispaniola has only served to obscure the true facts of this important aspect of Anglo-Spanish rivalry.⁹ An entry in Howell's ledger on 20 August 1527 reads:

The saide day for a recaudo of John de Morsyns my factor in to the Indias into Isla de San Domyngo for sartene stoffe that I sent w^t hym as be the recaudo playnly dothe apere to the some of 200 / ducattes amo^t—1 li.¹⁰

John de Morsyns was doubtless a commission agent and the terms of the *compañía* similar to many others drawn up for English merchants by the notaries of Seville.¹¹

¹ Cf. André Sayous, 'Partnerships in the Trade between Spain and America and also in the Spanish Colonies in the Sixteenth Century', in *Journal of Economic and Business History* (February, 1929), 1, no. 2, p. 282.

² The ledger, ff. 78, 79, etc.

³ P.R.O., H.C.A., Examinations, 3, 4 November 1538.

⁴ Ibid. 2, 9 May 1537.

⁵ The best illustration of this is to be found in the case of Austin and others v. Castelyn. Ibid. 3, 4 passim, etc.

⁶ Archivo de Protocolos de Sevilla, *Oficio* xv, temp. Hen. VIII, passim, etc.

⁷ P.R.O., State Papers, Henry VIII, vol. 161, ff. 76-78.

⁸ Archivo de Protocolos de Sevilla, *Oficio* v, 1525, *Libro* 1, ff. 390, 607, 617 d, etc.

⁹ Richard Hakluyt, *The Principal Voyages* (Maclehose ed.), x, 6. See my 'English merchants trading to the New World in the Early Sixteenth Century,' in *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research*, vol. xxiii, no. 67 (1950), pp. 53-67.

¹⁰ The ledger, f. 65 v.

¹¹ Archivo de Protocolos de Sevilla, *Oficio* v, 1525, *Libro* 1, f. 315, etc.

The 'sartene stofe' probably consisted chiefly of cloths which had a prominent place among the exports of the English merchants in Seville to the New World.

Thomas Howell's ledger is a record of his transactions and, above all, of his accounts with his agents. It is not a profit and loss account. Indeed, as is usual in this period, there is 'scant evidence of any attempts at a precise calculation of profits and capital'.¹ An analysis of Howell's profits is therefore not possible. On certain occasions his gain from specific sales is stated, although sometimes it is difficult to reconcile the profits he enters with his own figures. It is possible, also, in some instances where shipments can be traced from the one country to the other and all expenses are shown, to estimate the profits he made on them. From the size and scope of his transactions we have a good indication of the importance of his trade. It is of great value to know the cost to an English merchant of the chief commodities imported into England from Spain and their worth in the English market, especially as the customs valuations are known to have been in many cases much lower than current market prices.² Freightage rates and the cost of the various services in loading and unloading these goods, commission and brokerage are likewise obtainable from the ledger. Unfortunately, details of Spanish duties are usually lacking and the cost of getting the merchandise 'clere aboard' ship is given. Reference is often made, however, to the sales tax or *alcabala* which Howell's agents apparently paid at $3\frac{1}{2}\%$.³

We get glimpses in the pages of the ledger of most of the leading English merchants in Spain at this time, including in their number some of the most enterprising business men England produced in the early Tudor period. Robert Thorne of Bristol and his friend Roger Barlow, whose efforts to arouse interest in English projects for the discovery of new trade routes met with almost no response from more timid souls at home,⁴ were associates of Howell in Seville.⁵ The latter also had business dealings with Robert Thorne's brother, Nicholas,⁶ who visited Seville for trading purposes.⁷ William Pepwell, the leading petitioner to Henry VIII for the formation of the Andalusia Company, dealt frequently with the London draper; so did William Ostriche, governor of the company in its darkest days when the activities of the Inquisition threatened the lives as well as the goods of many of its members.⁸ Mention is made, too,⁹ of Thomas Pery, whose own account of his ordeal at the hands of the Inquisitors gives the most graphic details of this extremely important period in the history of Anglo-Spanish trade in the sixteenth century.¹⁰ Among such men religious persecution, and the loss of their wealthy business resulting from it, were eventually to make the despoliation of their former allies a favourite maritime enterprise. But Thomas Howell remained until his death on good terms with the Spaniards.¹¹

The ledger contains copies of two wills made by Thomas Howell¹² but neither was his last. His legacy to the Drapers' Hall caused much trouble to his executors. It was reported that the Drapers' representative had been refused

¹ Yamey, op. cit. p. 110.

² Gras, op. cit. p. 128, n. 6.

³ The ledger, f. 14, etc.

⁴ E. G. R. Taylor, *Tudor Geography, 1485-1583* (1930), chap. 3.

⁵ The ledger, f. 65 v.

⁶ Ibid. f. 59 v.

⁷ Archivo de Protocolos de Sevilla, *Oficio* v, 1527, *Libro* 1, f. 3.

⁸ Letters and Papers of Henry VIII, xiv (i), no. 848.

⁹ The ledger, f. 35.

¹⁰ Letters and Papers of Henry VIII, xv, no. 281.

¹¹ This caused Richard Abbis, another London merchant, to accuse Howell of dying a traitor to the King. Ibid. xiii (ii), no. 660.

¹² The ledger, ff. 30 v and 94 v.

admittance to the Spanish courts because in his credentials Henry VIII was styled Supreme Head of the English Church¹ and more difficulties followed before his money eventually arrived from Spain. This was ten years after the last entry in the ledger, but already when Howell's book closes the most prosperous days of the English merchants in Spain were numbered. Soon they were to petition the Duke of Medina Sidonia for the renewal of their privileges, which they said were not being maintained² and William Pepwell was to request the English king to grant them permission to form a closer union for the protection of their interests in Spain.³ The formation of the Andalusia Company does not mark the beginning of the expansion of Anglo-Spanish trade in the sixteenth century but is a sign of the consciousness of the English merchants of the difficult times that lay ahead. It is a sign, indeed, of the beginning of the end of the prosperous period reflected in the folios of the ledger of Thomas Howell.

Finally, the ledger is valuable for a consideration of the evidence of book-keeping techniques as an indication of the development of business practice in this period. Great importance was attached to sound book-keeping by the general body of English merchants in Spain at that time. Merchants' wills, in particular, bear testimony to the moral obligation of leaving their books in such condition that there would be no difficulty in settling their affairs. Emphasis was placed on the accounts being easily interpreted by others, and not merely existing for the convenience of the merchant compiling them. We have a record of the view of Thomas Howell himself, given when called upon to state his opinion of the ill-kept books of a fellow-merchant in Andalusia. Howell said on 10 June 1528:

that he hath beyn in the partyes of Spayne goyng and comyng by the space of xxvj yeres or therabouts by all whiche tyme he hath usyd marchaundyse and beyn allowed in cumpanye of marchauntes as well straungers of all nacions as Englysshe men and he never sawe any accompt gevyn by any marchaunt of what nacion soever he were of/but the playnnes therof myght be easelly perceyved by every man that hath any knowledge and not to be gevyn yn suche forme as noo man can understonde yt but hym selfe orelles the marchauntes of Spayn wyll call hym noo playn marchaunt.⁴

Howell's own ledger was kept in accordance with these standards and is worth the close attention of students of Tudor economic history, particularly in relation to the cloth industry, business technique and general organization of English overseas trade.

Birkbeck College, London

¹ Letters and Papers of Henry VIII, xiii (ii), no. 660.

² Ibid. iv (iii), no. 6686.

³ Letters and Papers of Henry VIII, iv (iii), no. 6654.

⁴ P.R.O., State Papers, Henry VIII, vol. 48, f. 158.

THE DECLINE OF NORWICH

By M. F. LLOYD PRICHARD

BEFORE the eighteenth century, Norwich was a proud, prosperous place. The comment of Sir John Harrington is typical: 'I should judge this city to be another Utopia, the people live so orderly, the streets kept so cleanly, the tradesmen, young and old, so industrious, the better sort so provident and withall so charitable, that it is rare to meet a beggar there, as it is common to see them in Westminster.'¹

From 1700, however, Norwich's difficulties grew and the condition of the city throws light on the retreat of the woollen industry, because much of the prosperity of Norfolk was bound up with that of Norwich. It may be impossible to give a final explanation of the removal of the woollen manufacture to the north of England, but it is possible to suggest some tentative conclusions. The conclusions will differ from those reached by various writers on the subject,² some of whom are concerned to show that the transference of the industry was made mainly in the third decade of the nineteenth century and that Norwich was fairly prosperous to that date.

Expenditure on poor relief from 1705 to 1845 is shown in the following Table:

	£		£
1705	2858	1785	17,189
1715	4567	1795	20,234
1725	5687	1804 ³	20,019
1735	2412	1815	20,461
1745	3092	1825	21,822
1755	5121	1835	22,644
1765	4684	1845	30,318
1773 ³	11,000		

It will be noted that though there are periodic increases in the early years, the second half of the eighteenth century from 1765 reveals a very large rise, which continues to the middle of the nineteenth century.

In the first decade of the eighteenth century, Norwich was in trouble partly owing to the transference of stocking manufacture. Competition of East India goods depressed the demand for the city's woollen goods and when import from the East Indies was forbidden, home-produced cotton goods presented new dangers. In 1709 Norwich petitioned the House of Commons about the decline of trade, and in 1710 passed a by-law to compel all persons selling goods or using

¹ *Nugae Antiquae*, vol. II. Published 1769, but written before 1612.

² Notably Sir John Clapham, 'The Transference of the worsted Industry from Norfolk to the West Riding', *Econ. J.* (June 1910), pp. 195-210. Other writers who comment on the subject include A. Redford, *Labour Migration in England, 1800-1850* (1926); L. W. Moffit, *England on the Eve of the Industrial Revolution* (1925); B. W. Bowden, *Industrial Society in England towards the end of the Eighteenth Century* (1925).

³ Gaps in the Norwich Court of Guardian Accounts from 1772 to 1783 and from 1805 to 1813 make it impossible to give the 1775 and 1805 totals. The figure for 1773 is taken from a statement made by Sir Harbord Harbord at a meeting in London in 1774 (see a *Comprehensive History of the Woollen and Worsted Manufacture*, by James Bisschop (1842)).

any trade in Norwich to become freemen, to prevent the city being crowded with artificers and chapmen from the country. Shortly afterwards, a workhouse was successfully established. But the state of Norwich remained depressed as an address,¹ presented to George I in 1718, shows. The address alleges that '... We have gradually since the Revolution, grown poorer with the rest of the Nation, till her late Majesty of glorious Memory, gave us some short interval to breath in by a Peace, tho' we were at that time too far gone to retrieve our former prosperity...'

The petition goes on to say that for various reasons, markets in France, Spain and Turkey had been lost to England. The result was that in Norwich, the 'poor increase, and the rich forsake us'.

Apart from the allowances which must be made for the reactions of the Norwich manufacturers to the newly signed treaty, the address is of interest because it shows the importance attached to foreign trade, for it is often asserted that the city was principally dependent on home consumption.² The home market was, of course, important, and its decline a matter of great moment. In July 1719, it was reported to the Court in Norwich that people were rioting and going about 'cutting or leaving in pieces calicos',³ and in November a petition was presented to the House of Commons protesting against the use of printed calicos and pointing out that the weaving trade had benefited Norwich in particular and the Kingdom in general, and that the manufacture of woollen and silk goods and woollen stuffs had given employment to 120,000 people. Further petitions followed in 1720 and there was much rejoicing when the Act was passed in 1721, prohibiting the weaving of cotton goods.

At this period, further encouragement was given to Norwich during the administration of Sir Robert Walpole, by the order that court mourning should be made of Norwich crepes. Defoe, visiting Norwich in 1723, commented on the lively industry of the county which radiated from the city. He noted that yarn was spun for Norwich in other counties, in Yorkshire and Westmorland, as well as Norfolk, and repeated the figure of 120,000 people employed.⁴

Later in the 1720's, complaints again appeared in the Mayor's Court Book about the decay of trade, and in November 1730 a petition was prepared protesting against the vast export of manufactured woollen goods from Ireland and of export of wool from England; it pleaded for a release of the duty on Irish wool and yarn and the opening of a convenient port so that these might be received without the expense of land carriage.⁵ The export of yarn from Ireland to England and the opening of Great Yarmouth for imports were achieved some years later, but, meanwhile, Norwich was threatened by home-produced cotton goods and made abortive efforts to produce cotton goods herself.

¹ British Museum 1889, D. 3 (86).

² Cf. *A General History of the County of Norfolk intended to Convey all the Information of a Norfolk Town by John Chambers* (1829), (2 volumes), vol. 1, p. 90. This work is referred to throughout Sir John Clapham's article as by J. Stacey, but though it was printed by and for J. Stacey, it was written by John Chambers.

³ Mayor's Court Book, 1719-28.

⁴ Daniel Defoe's *Tour through Great Britain*, vol. 1 (1927 ed.), p. 61. Sir John Clapham takes the figure of 120,000 people employed to be an exaggeration (p. 196), but A. D. Bayne, in his *History of the Industry and Trade of Norwich and Norfolk* (1858), says that it includes all the females who spun yarns in Yorkshire and Westmorland as well as in Norfolk.

⁵ Norwich Assembly Book 1707-1745. The author of *Some Considerations Relating to the Importation of... Bay Yarn from Ireland to Bristol, etc.* (1730), said that the price would only be 1½% cheaper and not 3% as the Norwich manufacturers argued and that it was not worth bothering about. The author was presumably a Bristol man.

There are signs from the 1740's that Norwich was beginning to feel competition from Yorkshire. Its workers organized unions to keep up wages, and warned outsiders that they would experience physical violence if they came into Norwich as blacklegs. The author of *A Short View of the Rise, Progress and Establishment of the Woollen Manufacture* (1753), describing the northern manufacturers, said that they had 'been found brisk, active and punctual in their bargaining for wool and of late years have rivaled those of Norwich, as well in buying wool as in selling their Manufactures'.

The last years of George II's and the early years of George III's reigns were more prosperous, but after 1765 Norwich trade again began to decline. Reduced wages and high prices produced serious riots in 1766 for which two persons were executed in 1767.

Expenditure on poor relief continued to rise. In 1771, however, Arthur Young gave a not unduly pessimistic account of Norwich,¹ though he agreed that the dispute between Britain and the colonies was injuring Norwich and that the foreign market was overstocked. He calculated values for Norwich exports as follows:

1. Regular export to Rotterdam by shipping every six weeks:	
goods per annum	£480,000
2. 26 tons of goods sent by wagon weekly to London at £500 a ton	
on an average	676,000
3. By occasional ships and wagons to various places	200,000
	<u>£1,356,000</u>

He proceeds: 'Upon a reconsideration of the Table, it was thought that the £676,000 by wagons, was rather too high; suppose, therefore, only 10,000 tons, it is then £520,000 and the total £1,200,000.' But, as will be noted, Young himself miscalculated, because 10,000 tons at £500 amounts to £5,000,000. What he meant was that 26 tons of goods sent by wagon weekly to London at £500 a ton on an average £13,000 per week created a value of £676,000 and, in his amended calculation, £10,000 per week amounted to £520,000.

By other methods, calculating the sums returned annually from every house in Norwich, by estimating the number of looms at 12,000 and allowing each to make £100 value per annum, Young deduced the same total of £1,200,000. Assuming that each loom gave work to six persons, making 72,000 employed in and out of Norwich, he calculated that each person earned £16 a year. He considered this a high figure, but declared that if there were a mistake, it must be in the number of looms and not in the trade returns, which, he said, were taken 'from clear facts, not suppositions'. He proceeded to deduct master manufacturers' profit at 14% which reduced £16 a year to £11. 11s. a year. Here, again, his arithmetic is faulty. The correct figure is £13. 15s., an average of 5 $\frac{5}{13}$ s. per week per worker.²

¹ *The Farmer's Tour through the East of England, 1771*. The sum of £1,200,000 value of goods produced, based on 12,000 looms contributing £100 each per annum seems to have been generally accepted. It crops up again in *The Norfolk Tour* (edited by R. Beatniffe, 5th ed. 1795) but with a different weight and value attached to the classes of goods:

1 To Rotterdam by shipping every six weeks, goods to the value p.a.	£150,000
2 Ten tons by broad wheeled wagons, weekly to London at £600 per ton	
on an average	312,000
3 By occasional ships to Ostend, Hamburg, Spain, Italy and the Baltic	738,000
	<u>£1,200,000</u>

² As an average income, this figure appears high.

Young held a poor view of the Norwich workers and complained that they rioted because of high prices. His opinion was that they wanted low prices because these permitted them to work less. He did not connect riots with serious deficiencies in trade, though later he changed his views on Norwich.

The years immediately following Young's visit were marked by increasing expenditure on the poor, reaching £11,000 in 1773 compared with £4000 in 1764. Letters between members of the Gurney family in Dublin and Norwich, relating to the yarn trade, are in this period filled with reports of fluctuating yarn prices, fear of war and bankruptcies.¹

Trade picked up again by 1777, but by the 1780's it was again low. Further attempts were made to check parades of unemployed beggars and 'the Constables and other Peace Officers' were ordered to arrest them and bring them before the Mayor.² During this decade, Arthur Young, attacking the Norwich manufacturers for indolence, declared in the dispute over the Wool Bill, that they were bent on preventing the flourishing and increasing manufactures of Yorkshire and Lancashire from obtaining wool from distant counties, and were trying to maintain a monopoly 'to check the rivalry which the superior industries of those counties has rendered so formidable to the southern manufacturers.'³ He added that the southerners had discovered 'that a large profit on a small capital is better for an individual than a small profit on a large one. Let them have one advantage and they will usurp to themselves another; thus we see they pay the poor they employ beyond all comparison worse than any other fabric in the Kingdom. . . . Examine the trade and you will look in vain for that ardour of enterprise, that activity of pursuit, that spirit of invention which have so nobly distinguished the efforts of British industry, when exerted on iron, cotton, porcellane, glass, etc. . . . all is sluggish. . . . dead.' He exempted from this charge the Yorkshire branch of cloth manufactures 'which increase and are pushed with vigour'.⁴

Young returned to the attack two years later, pointing out that Norfolk was starving. He said that there must be something peculiar in the situation of the county, for it was alleged that illicit exportation of wool was the cause; but why, Young inquired, had not the same exportation the same effect in Yorkshire?⁵ Commenting on evidence given by Charles Clapham of Leeds, and Jeremiah Ives of Norwich, before the Lords' Committee of the Wool Bill, Young said: 'The fact is, Yorkshire undersells Norwich and her manufacturers cry out for loading the landed interest with fresh burthens, because she is outstripped in industry and activity by her Northern rivals.'⁶

In 1798 John Taylor⁷ published an article (signed T) in the *Monthly Magazine* for December on 'The History of Norwich Manufactures', describing their course from 1700. 'From the beginning of the present century, till within these forty

¹ Gurney MSS. Letters between Richard and John Gurney, Thomas Bland and Robert Bell.

² *Ibid.* 1782-89.

³ *Annals of Agriculture* (1786), vii, 134.

⁴ *Ibid.* vii, 163-164.

⁵ *Ibid.* (1788), ix, 248, 504. In the same volume Rev. Mr Valpy of Reading commented that the seat of woollen, as of other manufactures, was gradually retreating to the north.

⁶ *Ibid.* (1788), x, 167.

⁷ John Taylor began business in Norwich in 1773 as a yarn maker in partnership with his brother Richard. He was a member of the Court of Guardians and is said to have been responsible for the introduction of spinning into the charity schools under sanction of Bishop Bagot. He also tried to introduce spinning machines into the Heckington workhouse where, in the absence of water power, he proposed that they be turned by two paupers. He assisted in a deputation to stop the export of wool and engaged in controversy with Young. He became a wool factor in 1789.

years, this Kingdom took off a very considerable quantity of stuffs of various kinds; the crepes of Norwich were in very common use', but 'this unpleasant fabric unsupported by ministerial influence, soon fell into disgrace and gave way to more elegant manufactures; and the destruction of our home trade was completed by the prevalence of articles made from cotton which the inventions of Arkwright and others rendered much cheaper than formerly. Excluded in a large degree from a share in the trade of this Kingdom, our merchant manufacturers did not sit down supinely... By sending their sons to be educated in Germany, Spain and Italy, they qualified them for the execution of their plans and at the same time cultivated a more familiar connexion with those countries. ... Norwich was now crowded with its looms; every winter's evening exhibited to the traveller entering its walls, the appearance of a general illumination... and though the distaff and spinning wheel throughout Norfolk and Suffolk were incessantly plied, yet the produce was inadequate to the demand. It became necessary to increase the importation of bay yarn from Ireland'. Taylor went on: 'From this meridian of its prosperity, this manufactory began to show symptoms of declension before we entered upon this war, which has so effectually ruined it.' He added that the returns of the manufactory were then about £800,000.

The article is of interest, not only because Taylor had first-hand knowledge of the industry, but because it shows first how the home market for Norwich goods was lost and how the difficulties encountered in the foreign trade were aggravated by war. Much of his material was repeated by John Chambers thirty years later, but without acknowledgement, and other writers also borrowed from Taylor and used his data, while giving the impression that they were describing conditions in their own day. This led later writers to erroneous conclusions about the Norwich manufacture,¹ allowing them to post-date its decline by thirty or forty years.

The depression of the last quarter of the century is also reflected in the expenditure on poor relief, which increased from £11,000 in 1773 to £24,000 by 1800. The numbers in the workhouses rose from 900 to 1446 in the same period.

Abraham Rees, in his *Cyclopaedia*,² commented that the manufacture of the coarser kinds of worsteds, except camlets, had been transferred in a great measure into Yorkshire, and he dated the concentration there from the 1770's when more than half of England's textile exports were supplied by that county. The manufacture of camlets, calimancoes and bombazines faded from Norwich in the early years of the nineteenth century. In 1829 it was calculated that there were about 1500 looms at work in the city. Nine years later, Anna Gurney, writing to Joseph John Gurney in Philadelphia, reported: 'The camlet manufacture is to all appearance, *gone* from Norwich, being supplanted in the few remaining markets for it by power loom articles of a similar description manufactured in the south of Yorkshire.'³ Later in the same year, 1838, she

¹ John Chambers, *op. cit.*, takes for example a statement made by Taylor that much employment was given in spinning for poor women and children in Norfolk in the era of revived prosperity and applies it to the year 1808 when this activity was much reduced. The author of *The Norfolk Tour* (6th ed. 1808) uses his statement about the returns being £800,000 and gives a figure of 8000 looms employed, which is taken up by Sir John Clapham and referred to 1808. Sir John, following Chambers, uses Taylor's statement about the hey-day of Norwich trade and relates it to the period after 1782 (p. 202) when there is reason to believe that it referred to the period about 1760.

² Ed. 1819, article on worsted.

³ Gurney MSS., 13 August 1838.

added: 'The Manufacturers are introducing power looms into Norwich. I hope it will answer as I believe it will increase the quantity of work.'¹

In 1831 and 1832 interesting letters appeared in the *East Anglian*² from 'Senex', who gave as reasons for the collapse of Norwich trade, the competition of cotton, the loss of the European market through war, the application of machinery to the industry in Yorkshire, and reduced orders given by the East India Company. The last circumstance is of particular interest because reference has been made to 'the somewhat dangerously steady demand of John Company'.³ The fact is that demand fluctuated and the pages of the *Norwich Mercury* in the later years of the eighteenth century frequently referred to disappointments felt by small orders from this source. For years the Company itself warned its correspondents that trade both with India and China was inevitably capricious.⁴

Such are the causes which made decline in Norwich inevitable. The material handicap under which Norfolk laboured at a crucial stage of industrial change must be stressed, particularly as much has been said of detestable party animosity which prevented Norwich keeping pace with other manufacturing communities. For the provision of water-power, Yorkshire was blessed with swiftly running streams and, when the possibilities of steam were discovered, she had easy access to supplies of coal. But even if steam power had been exploited years before, Norwich would still have been at a disadvantage. The statement that Norwich was 'well placed for the receipt of sea-borne coal'⁵ must be much qualified if one is to reach a true understanding of her position.

Early in the eighteenth century, a petition was presented to Parliament entitled 'The Case of the Counties of Norfolk, Suffolk, City of Norwich and County of the same against the Corporation of Great Yarmouth' (1705), which complained of heavy dues placed upon persons not free of Yarmouth trying to import coal via that port, and asking for leave to bring in a bill to regulate the charges to be paid by 'unfreeman importers'. Another petition was presented in 1762 from merchants and dealers in coal in Norwich, who laid before the Assembly a paper called 'The Case of the Consumers of Coal'. The case showed losses by householders, dyers, hotpressers, lime burners, brewers, maltsters, iron smiths, etc., and calculated that of 26,000 chaldrons imported into Norwich, 21,000 were consumed there, on which a tax of 8s. 1d. per chaldron was paid in duties, of which three-eighths were special dues levied by Yarmouth port authorities. In addition, the Case declared that the tax was rendered more grievous by illegal measurement at Yarmouth. The legal Chaldron consisted of 36 bushels, but at Yarmouth the chaldron was estimated not by bushels but by a measure called a 'mett', 16 of which were calculated to contain a chaldron.

In 1785 the Norwich consumers endeavoured to by-pass the Yarmouth port authorities and presented to the Commissioners of Customs the Case of Samuel Nicholson, master of the *Endeavour* of Castleford who tried to unload his coal directly at Norwich, but was prevented because there was no Metter at Norwich. They pleaded for the privilege of having coals discharged at Norwich without interference at Yarmouth.⁶ Nothing came of it, however.

¹ Ibid. 23 October 1838.

² *East Anglian*, 18 January, 9 August 1831; 7, 14, 21, 28 February and 6 March 1832.

³ Sir John Clapham, op. cit. p. 202.

⁴ First, Second and Third Reports of the Select Committee appointed by the... Directors of the East India Company to take into consideration the Export Trade from Great Britain to the East Indies, 1793.

⁵ Sir John Clapham, *An Economic History of Modern Britain: The Early Railway Age, 1830-1850*, p. 42.

⁶ Mayors' Court Book 1782-1789 (July and September 1785).

The illegal measure at Yarmouth was eventually done away with, but there remained the heavy duty on sea-borne coals and this was a burden on the manufacturers from which those in the north situated in the coal districts were exempted. But relief through the repeal of the duty and cheaper carriage of coal by rail came too late to save the Norwich manufacture, which, handicapped as it was by severe competition at home, loss of markets abroad, changing tastes, dear fuel and out-of-date production techniques, was effectively surpassed by Yorkshire by the opening of the nineteenth century.

Cambridge

BRITISH INDUSTRIAL VILLAGES IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

By W. ASHWORTH

THE accommodation of rapidly expanding industry and population in towns which were continually increasing in size and density is at once a striking feature and a commonplace of nineteenth-century history. But, although only quite recently has there been any appreciable movement of industry away from the packed centres of towns, it is possible to trace back through the nineteenth century a reaction against the growing town, which occasionally led to practical achievements. A study of this movement and an attempt to account both for its persistence as an idea and for the meagreness of its immediate constructive influence may throw some light on the dominant factors affecting the nature of urban development and the intensity of industrial localization in the period.

When factory industries began to appear in the late eighteenth century, it was common enough for them to settle in a fairly dispersed fashion over predominantly rural areas, partly because of their initial dependence on water-power and partly because few substantial towns then existed.¹ The early factory communities were often village communities, and the industrial village was ready to hand as a convenient framework for attempts at social reform under the conditions of a new type of economic organization. The experiments, too well known to need further discussion here, of such pioneers as Samuel Oldknow and Robert Owen, and the theorizings of the latter, are important events in the history of industrial villages.²

But by the eighteen-thirties, when the wider adoption of steam power had made diffusion of industry a matter more of option than necessity, most factory industry had acquired an urban environment. It is true that so acute an observer as Cooke Taylor declared in 1840 that until very recently most new mills had been erected in villages and suburbs;³ but the few instances to which he could refer seem inadequate to support his generalization, and subsequent development abundantly confirmed that the trend was strongly in favour of the large town and against the village as an industrial centre. The most that could be said was that some factory villages which had arisen earlier still maintained their existence, but they were survivals rather than new creations. Nevertheless, the best of them, such as Turton under the Ashworths⁴ and Styal under the Gregs, provided valuable models for future experiments and philanthropic reforms.

Although, however, both industry and population were congregating in the towns, the inadequacies of the latter were, in the middle of the nineteenth century, causing a few idealists to demand some different form of development.

¹ The *Census* of 1801 recorded only twenty towns with populations of more than 20,000 in Great Britain.

² On Oldknow's activities at Marple see G. Unwin and others, *Samuel Oldknow and the Ark-wrights* (Manchester, 1924), esp. pp. 162-75. On Owen at New Lanark and the ideas which he tried to put into practice there see, *inter alia*, his own *Statement regarding the New Lanark Establishment* (Edinburgh, 1812), and *A New View of Society, and other writings* (Everyman's Library, 1927).

³ W. Cooke Taylor, *Notes on a Tour in the Manufacturing Districts of Lancashire* (1842), p. 140.

⁴ *Ibid.* pp. 21-36, for a detailed contemporary account of Turton.

Numerous visionary schemes were put forward, of which the most elaborate was probably that of Buckingham in 1849 for the building of a new model town, Victoria, with accommodation for 10,000 people and with a surrounding belt of about 10,000 acres of agricultural land.¹ Some of these schemes had an architectural inspiration: for example, that of Moffatt in 1845 for housing 350,000 people in garden villages within ten miles of London.² Others, like the project which Minter Morgan was advocating throughout the eighteen-forties,³ were primarily associated with a particular religious outlook. Their common feature was that none of them had any immediate practical results.

More influential were a few schemes of village building and improvement undertaken by established businessmen. Early examples which attracted attention included Bessbrook in Ireland (a village which was begun by Messrs Richardson, the linen manufacturers, in 1846),⁴ and the small village built in 1853 at Bromborough for the workers at Price's candle factory. But the outstanding achievement, which deserves fuller consideration, was Saltaire.

Saltaire was the creation of Titus Salt, who had risen to fortune as a woollen manufacturer. He had originally planned to retire at the age of 50, but, as that time drew near, he resolved instead on another project: to replace his existing mills in Bradford by one enormous factory, larger than all of them together, and to build round it a new town for his workpeople.⁵ He selected a site which was crossed by both canal and railway and was entirely free from buildings, save for an old water-mill,⁶ and began building his new factory in 1851. This was opened in 1853 on his fiftieth birthday. It was, for that time, of astonishing size, covering 6½ acres⁷ and employing some 3000 people.⁸

Although the factory preceded the other buildings and for a time the workpeople were conveyed to and from Bradford by special train,⁹ a plan for a complete town existed from the beginning and Salt's orders were known before the factory was opened.¹⁰ Over the next twenty years the plan was gradually realized. The first concern was to provide houses for at any rate a substantial proportion of the workpeople, amenities and institutions being left until later. For overlookers, parlour houses with from three to six bedrooms were built at a cost of about £200 each (excluding land, roads and drainage) and ordinary workmen's cottages were built for £120 each. Rents ranged from 2s. 4d. to 7s. 6d. per week and returned approximately 4% on capital outlay, which is less than would have been expected of normal commercial investment.¹¹

The founder also bore the cost of most of the public buildings of his town. In 1859 a Congregational church was completed at his sole expense,¹² and nine years later a Wesleyan chapel was built by public subscription on a site given by him for the purpose.¹³ Temporary accommodation was provided for elementary schools from the foundation of the town, and in 1868 permanent buildings were

¹ J. S. Buckingham, *National Evils and Practical Remedies* (1849), pp. 141–55.

² A. W. Brunt, 'Experiments Sixty Years Ago', in *The Garden City*, New Series (1906), 1, 31.

³ J. M. Morgan, *The Christian Commonwealth* (1850), and *Letters to a Clergyman on Institutions for Ameliorating the Condition of the People; chiefly from Paris, in the autumn of 1845* (1849).

⁴ J. E. Budgett Meakin, *Model Factories and Villages: Ideal Conditions of Labour and Housing* (1905), pp. 419–20.

⁵ R. Balgarnie, *Sir Titus Salt, Baronet: His Life and its Lessons* (1877), p. 114.

⁶ J. Burnley, *Sir Titus Salt, and George Moore* (1885), p. 44.

⁷ A. Holroyd, *Saltaire and its Founder* (Saltaire, 1871), p. 11.

⁸ Balgarnie, op. cit. p. 135.

⁹ Burnley, op. cit. p. 49.

¹⁰ *The Manchester Guardian*, 21 September 1853.

¹¹ J. Hole, *The Homes of the Working Classes, with Suggestions for their Improvement* (1866), pp. 67–8.

¹² Holroyd, op. cit. p. 17.

¹³ Ibid. p. 18.

erected at a cost of £7000.¹ Salt also paid careful attention to the needs of public health; he installed a thorough and complete drainage system (a comparative rarity in 1860); he built an accident infirmary and a dispensary and issued disinfectant to the people during the cholera epidemic;² and in 1863 he opened a set of baths and wash-houses.³ In fact, he provided the equipment which in the next forty or fifty years all towns gradually realized that they must provide for themselves. He also followed a long tradition of English philanthropy by building and endowing forty-five alms-houses, whose inmates received 7s. 6d. per week if they were single, or shared 10s. per week if they were a married couple.⁴ One more of Salt's innovations deserves passing notice; the factory canteen which sold meat for 2d., soup for 1d., tea or coffee for $\frac{1}{2}$ d., and offered free cooking and accommodation to workpeople who preferred to bring their own food.⁵ With true nonconformist zeal, Salt banned all public-houses, but tried to replace them by the gift in 1871 of a club and institute which had a library and reading room, two rooms for use as an art school, a lecture room and laboratory for science, a main concert hall, a committee room, a bagatelle room, a billiard room, a gymnasium, a drill room and an armoury.⁶

In this same year, 1871, Saltaire as planned by its founder was completed by the opening of a 14-acre park.⁷ At that time the town consisted of four main thoroughfares, twenty-one other streets and four squares, with 820 dwellings for a population of 4389. It hardly conformed to the ideas of later town planners, for the residential area was only $25\frac{3}{4}$ acres,⁸ the density being thirty-two houses and 170 persons per residential acre, or 89 persons per gross acre. But by the standards of its time it was a notable achievement in the improvement of living conditions, and it was widely recognized as such. Salt had been invited to enter his town for a prize at the Paris Exhibition of 1867, but declined to do so; not long afterwards his work was publicly recognized by the bestowal of a baronetcy.

Saltaire was acknowledged to be a model, but it was not a model that was copied. In the twenty years when it was being built, the private philanthropy that concerned itself with the homes of the people found far more than it could cope with in the centres of the great towns. Outside the large cities, efforts to improve the physical environment were, with this one exception of Saltaire, few and feeble.

Where improved industrial housing was provided in the mid-Victorian period outside the large towns the commonest reason was the difficulty of attracting sufficient labour without it. The efforts, for example, of E. W. (afterwards Sir Edward) Watkin to develop Grimsby as a port had little success until in 1860 he began to build houses to attract fishermen from elsewhere.⁹ The opening of a new mine or extension of an old one in a rural area also sometimes led the interests concerned to provide rather better housing than was usual there and to add other services and amenities.¹⁰ But of attempts to follow the model of

¹ Balgarnie, *op. cit.* p. 136.

² Holroyd, *loc. cit.*

³ *Ibid.* pp. 224-5.

⁴ Balgarnie, *op. cit.* p. 145.

⁵ *Ibid.* pp. 233-4. This canteen had another characteristic familiar to the present day: £50 a year was realized towards its upkeep by the sale of its waste to pig-keepers.

⁶ *Ibid.* pp. 226-9.

⁷ *Ibid.* pp. 15-16.

⁸ Holroyd, *op. cit.* pp. 30-1.

⁹ R. J. Simpson, 'In what way can healthy Working Men's Dwellings be erected in lieu of those removed for carrying out Sanitary or Municipal Improvements or for other purposes?' in *Transactions of the National Association for the Promotion of Social Science*, 1874, p. 617.

¹⁰ For examples see Simpson, *loc. cit.*, and A. Raistrick, *Two Centuries of Industrial Welfare: The London (Quaker) Lead Company, 1692-1905* (1938), pp. 21-30. The extension of mining, of course, often involved no improvement in living conditions, rather perhaps the reverse.

Saltaire, those of Edward Akroyd were almost the only examples and they were much inferior to the original. Akroyd built a suburb for his workers around his factory at Copley near Halifax, with allotment gardens, a recreation ground, a church and a village school, of which one room served also as a public library and news-room.¹ Akroyd also initiated a second Halifax suburb, named after him, Akroydon, but this was separate from any industrial undertaking, being a scheme to assist working men to build houses on land owned by him and to purchase them through the Halifax Permanent Benefit Building Society.²

The improvement of the physical environment was by the eighteen-seventies receiving greatly increased attention, but efforts were concentrated almost entirely on existing urban centres, and industrial villages seemed to have no future until a new practical example was provided by George Cadbury. Like Salt, he was seeking room to expand his business and found that purpose better served by leaving Birmingham and building on an unoccupied site, which he named Bournville. But Bournville was the outcome of a wider conception than Saltaire. It was never intended to be an 'employer's village' but was a full-scale experiment in community planning; in fact about 50 % of the occupied population have been employed elsewhere than at Cadbury Brothers' factory.³ Bournville was to be not only part of an improved system of industrial organization, but also a social example of general significance, and to make it effective as such, Cadbury was determined to show that it could be made to pay.⁴ In the long run he succeeded, but the many years of preparation when expenditure was being incurred without apparently hastening very much the day when a return could be expected would have deterred the ordinary commercial investor. The factory and a few cottages for those workmen whom it was essential to have close at hand were built in 1879, but it was not until 1895, when he had acquired 120 acres, that Cadbury really set to work to build a village,⁵ and even then progress was not rapid. There was the persistent problem of a free market that if land in one district is sought in bulk, the price is forced up throughout the neighbourhood; consequently it was necessary to lock up capital by purchasing small, scattered areas as opportunity arose and to build on them only when a compact portion had at last been acquired. That was one reason why it took twenty-five years to round off the Bournville Estate.⁶

Nevertheless, the building of the village gradually went ahead, and by 1900 Cadbury owned 330 acres, had erected about 300 houses in small groups along tree-lined roads, and had laid out open spaces. He was aware of some of the dangers of excessive paternalism, and in 1900 he renounced all financial interest in the undertaking, transferring ownership of the land and houses to an independent body, the Bournville Village Trust, on terms which ensured that all profits would be devoted to the further improvement and extension of the village.⁷ After this, Bournville was responsible for its own development, but of course it was in more favourable circumstances than an ordinary town. Current charges on capital had to be met (the Trust aimed at a profit of at least 4 %),⁸ but there was no claim for arrears in respect of the many years in which the founder had tied up capital without return; no commercial venture could have been deliberately framed on these lines. Moreover, Cadbury and his family and firm con-

¹ Hole, *op. cit.* pp. 70-1.

² *Ibid.* pp. 72-5.

³ Bournville Village Trust, *Sixty Years of Planning* (Bournville, 1943), p. 26.

⁴ *Ibid.* p. 7.

⁵ *Ibid.* pp. 10-11.

⁶ Cadbury Brothers Ltd., *Bournville Housing* (Bournville, 1922), p. 5.

⁷ Bournville Village Trust, *op. cit.* pp. 11-13. ⁸ Cadbury Brothers Ltd., *loc. cit.*

tinued to make various contributions. In 1906 elementary schools were given to the village by Mr and Mrs Cadbury;¹ in 1919 a Bournville Works Housing Society was formed to assist the workpeople to buy houses and was financed by the firm.² Bournville was neither a purely commercial venture nor a piece of undiluted philanthropy; but it successfully took root and grew and became strong enough to stand by itself.

The foundation of Bournville was followed by another notable undertaking, the building of Port Sunlight, which was begun in 1888. Once again the creation of a model village was part of a scheme which included the expansion of an already established business. In this case the association of the village with the firm was as close as it possibly could be. Port Sunlight was not, like Bournville, an attempt to demonstrate one practical answer to the housing problems of great cities, but rather it was a pioneer extension of its activities in labour-management by a growing industrial firm. W. H. Lever was greatly interested in schemes of profit-sharing, but was anxious to devise one which should be independent of any individual, and the building of Port Sunlight was the plan he chose.³ 'Prosperity-sharing' was the name he gave to his idea. He made his intention quite plain in his speech at the formal opening of the village in 1890: 'Our idea', he said, 'before we took the land at Port Sunlight, was that profit-sharing should be so managed that those who take the profits are those who are working at the works, and what we propose to do with the proportion of profit devoted to the workers is to apply it to the building of houses to be let at a reduced rental. We propose that those who have been longest in our service should have the greatest claim. We desire to encourage permanency in the people around us and we consider that by these arrangements the profits which are to be shared will always remain with the workers for the time being and not be divided up and squandered.'⁴

The village grew up on the lines implicit in this idea. Houses of sound quality were built and amenities provided on a generous scale; by 1904 two schools, a men's social club, a junior social club, an open-air swimming bath, an open-air theatre, a technical institute, Sunday schools and a church had all been provided; there was even a village inn, temperance at first, which Lever had consented to have licensed after 80% of the adult population had voted in favour of this step.⁵ But all these things were offshoots of the firm. The village was managed by a special department of the firm, and the tenants for many years could air their complaints only to the firm's estate manager.⁶

The contribution which the firm made, in addition to the vision and energy of W. H. Lever himself, was that no interest was charged on the capital outlay, no overheads were charged in respect of salaries and office accommodation for the estate management department, and, in the earlier years, temporary losses on income account were accepted, although rents were adjusted to keep such losses to a minimum. A surplus was realized for the first time in 1907, when about half the total deficit of the previous five years was recouped.⁷ At that time, when the total capital outlay was £498,526,⁸ the waiving of interest amounted in effect to a bonus of about £8 per employee,⁹ but the limitation and variety of accommodation meant that this bonus was not altogether evenly

¹ Bournville Village Trust, op. cit. p. 32.

² Ibid. p. 21.

³ Second Viscount Leverhulme, *Viscount Leverhulme by his Son* (1927), p. 53.

⁴ Ibid. pp. 54-5.

⁵ Ibid. pp. 91-7.

⁶ W. L. George, *Labour and Housing at Port Sunlight* (1909), p. 208.

⁷ Ibid. p. 96.

⁸ Ibid. p. 93.

⁹ Ibid. p. 195.

distributed. The firm considered itself amply recompensed by the improved quality of its labour, and certainly the growth of the business suggests that its expenditure on the village was no drag on its prosperity. On the other side, the health and vital statistics that Lever was fond of quoting are clear testimony to at least one kind of benefit which the workers derived.

Port Sunlight and Bournville were not quite the solitary expressions of an individual's idea that Saltaire had been. By the 'eighties, changes in the environment and location of industry had become at least a topic for occasional discussion. At the same time, landowners were faced with the new problem of agricultural depression and the gradual ebbing of population from the villages. It was in this setting that there was founded in 1883 a Society for Promoting Industrial Villages,¹ whose members included both social reformers and a few industrialists. The original president was Sir G. Campbell; the Rev. Henry Solly was chairman of the council, and among the vice-presidents were Lord Shaftesbury, Lord Aberdeen, Prof. Foxwell and Samuel Morley; the members of the council included James Hole, who was secretary of the Associated Chambers of Commerce, Benjamin Jones of the C.W.S., and Walter Hazell of the printing firm of Hazell, Watson and Co.² The objects of the society were entirely propagandist and it did not intend to participate in any financial schemes or undertakings requiring capital.³ Its viewpoint can best be illustrated from one of a series of pamphlets published under its auspices, where it was stated that 'the true answer to *The Bitter Cry* of outcast London and other great towns is to be heard in the dreary half-depopulated rural districts of the kingdom. The one evil must redress the other and the formation of Industrial Villages, on the plans recommended by the Society, will, we believe, best secure the object.'⁴ The proposals for the villages were quite imposing to read. Cottages were to be well-built, well-drained and well-ventilated, with legal safeguards against overcrowding and sub-letting; a surrounding belt of land was to be reserved in perpetuity for co-operative or cottage farming allotments, with provision for sports grounds and children's playgrounds; every cottage was to have a small garden plot; there were to be schools of three grades, a public hall, public libraries, art galleries and museums where practicable, provident dispensaries and sanatoria, public baths and wash-houses, and co-operative stores; social clubs and coffee taverns would be provided but public houses were, of course, prohibited.⁵ It was all, no doubt, very beneficent, but the only plan for its realization was that 'we trust and believe that many benevolent and public-spirited men will devote capital and energy to the successful prosecution of our plans'.⁶

The Society for Promoting Industrial Villages was not a very effective organization. It had a genuine case to state and was not alone in its advocacy. The economist, Alfred Marshall, for instance, was drawing attention to the way in which the crowding of industry in towns had raised workshop rents, which in

¹ Solly Collection, section 4(b) fol. D. 181. The Solly Collection of MSS., press-cuttings, handbills and pamphlets, is housed in the British Library of Political and Economic Science at the London School of Economics.

² Ibid. fol. D. 57.

³ Ibid. loc. cit. In 1887 some members of the society launched the Improved Villa and Cottage Homes General Land and Building Co. Ltd., for the purpose of building industrial villages, but it achieved nothing. (Ibid. fol. D. 223-D. 226.)

⁴ H. Solly, *Industrial Villages: a Remedy for Crowded Towns and Deserted Fields*, p. 3. Page references are to the edition printed by J. C. Durant. Another issue of the same date (1884) and from the same publishers (Swan, Sonnenschein) but printed by Sampson and Davey has different pagination.

⁵ Ibid. pp. 9-10.

⁶ Ibid. p. 15.

turn kept wages down, and was recommending on economic grounds that the home-industries of London should be transferred to districts in the country where rents were lower.¹ And one manufacturer told the society that he found urban expenses growing; he was paying £400 a year for the amount of water which, twenty years earlier, had cost him only £25, and rents and rates were also up, whereas, in the country, land was more readily obtainable and labour was cheaper, because of the decline of agriculture.² But, in spite of having a valid text on which to preach, the Society seems to have achieved few conversions, although it cast its net quite widely, sponsoring lectures to such various bodies as Trinity College, Cambridge, and the Guild of Co-operators, Uppingham School and the Fabian Society.³ Its resources were very restricted and in its early years it was financed almost entirely by Samuel Morley,⁴ who died in 1886. Its cash-book in the following years shows the small scale of its activities: for 1886-7 subscriptions totalled £49. 15s. and receipts from publications 7s.; for 1887-8 subscriptions were £51. os. 6d., receipts from publications and expenses repaid £1. 13s. 4d.⁵ Apart, however, from the handicap of small resources, the Society also suffered from a readiness to accept trivialities as evidence of the success of its efforts, and from a certain preciosity of outlook. The only new enterprises which, it was able to claim, owed their foundation partly to its influence were the Prescott Watch Company, a factory for light iron goods at Earlsfield, and a co-operative small-holding group which surely reached the nadir of nomenclature with its title of the Total Abstainers' Industrial Farm.⁶

Clearly the Society had not fully thought out the problems to which it addressed itself. It was incapable of promoting a vigorous movement and it quickly withered away. A meeting was called in September, 1889 to discuss its liabilities and arrange for winding up,⁷ and two months later an appeal was made to members to send donations to pay off the outstanding debt of £32. 17s. 11d.⁸ The disappearance of this rather pathetic society was due as much to its own internal weakness as to public apathy on the question of the decentralization of population and industry. Apathy there certainly was, but it was in fact a little less complete than formerly, and perhaps the propaganda of the Society for Promoting Industrial Villages, which had attracted a certain amount of favourable press comment, had contributed a little towards the creation of a more encouraging environment for subsequent developments.

It was in the next few years that Port Sunlight and Bournville became firmly established, and there was increasing attention by employers to the physical conditions and amenities of working life, which in a few cases extended to the direct provision of improved housing.⁹ Another stimulus came from the publication in 1898 of Ebenezer Howard's book *Tomorrow*, and its practical sequels, the foundation of the Garden City Association and of First Garden City Ltd., the public company which enthusiastically set about the building of a new town. The story of Letchworth and of those garden suburbs which found their inspiration in an imperfect understanding of Howard's ideas, lies beyond the scope of this essay, but the example of co-operative enterprise in the creation of a new

¹ A. Marshall, 'The Housing of the London Poor. Where to House them,' in the *Contemporary Review* (1884), XLV, 226-9.

² Society for Promoting Industrial Villages, *Third Annual Report*, p. 21.

³ *Ibid.* *Second Annual Report*, p. 10.

⁴ *Ibid.* *Second Annual Report*, p. 5.

⁵ *Ibid.* *Third Annual Report*, p. 52.

⁶ *Ibid.* *Third Annual Report*, pp. 4-6 and 14.

⁷ Solly Collection, section 4(b), fol. D. 200.

⁸ *Ibid.* fol. D. 204.

⁹ On this topic generally, see Meakin, *op. cit.*, *passim*.

urban unit was of the greatest significance. For it at least added a fruitful third choice to the alternatives of the unlimited and uncontrolled crowding of buildings into squalid towns which already existed, or of reliance on the exceptional individual in whom were combined the possession of large resources and a keen interest in the improvement of social conditions.

Nevertheless, individual business men and firms were more active in building industrial villages about the turn of the century than ever before. Their experiments took various forms. Two notable examples, the Foyers Estate on Loch Ness, acquired by the British Aluminium Co. in 1895 and later laid out on lines partly suggested by the Garden City Association,¹ and the Woodlands Colliery Village begun in 1907 by the Brodsworth Main Colliery Co.,² both arose from the need to settle population on a new site. The village built by Birmingham Corporation near its new waterworks in the Elan Valley³ was significant in marking the entry of local authorities into the activity of building model villages. Earswick, the creation of a trust founded in 1904 by Joseph Rowntree,⁴ was obviously based on the example of Bournville, which it resembled in its administrative arrangements, in not being limited to the founder's employees, and even in depending for its foundation on the profits of chocolate manufacture. Hull Garden Suburb, opened in 1908, was something of a hybrid. It was built and owned by the Hull Garden Village Co., whose chairman, Sir James Reckitt, owned two-thirds of its share capital of £200,000, and on half of its estate from one-half to two-thirds of the houses were reserved to be let to the employees of his firm. The remaining half of the estate was available for sale, under restrictions, for the erection of 400 to 500 houses, the directors being willing to sell land at cost price to any company or society intending to assist working men to own their houses.⁵

These were perhaps the outstanding examples of new industrial villages immediately after the establishment of Bournville and Port Sunlight had given a new fillip to this kind of reform. The history of industrial villages did not come to an end with these examples. Existing communities of this kind maintained themselves and some of them grew; occasionally a new venture of the same type was begun. But there was no notable innovation in this field (though industrial villages are among the significant antecedents of the new towns policy). It should therefore be possible, without extending the story, to observe the common features in the histories of these various industrial villages and to relate them to the general course of industrialization and urbanization.

Perhaps the obvious judgement would be to say that industrial villages were founded which provided healthier and more comfortable living conditions than the contemporary towns, that these villages were associated with businesses that showed no signs of damage from the connexion but continued to prosper; and that thus an example of well-doing was set, which received the compliment of lip-service, but not the flattery of imitation. But this carries implications that misrepresent the situation. To undertake a large and experimental enterprise, like the building of one or more industrial villages, required not only an abundant interest in the project and belief in its value, but also a command of the means to carry it out. This involved the possession of substantial capital reserves and of

¹ W. M. Morrison, 'Foyers Industrial Village' in *The Garden City* (1904), I, 8-9.

² P. B. Houghton, 'A Model Mining Village', in *Garden Cities and Town Planning*, New Series, (1908), III, 126-7.

³ J. J. Clarke, *The Housing Problem. Its History, Growth, Legislation and Procedure* (1920), p. 81.

⁴ G. B. Brown, 'The Joseph Rowntree Village Trust' in *The Garden City*, New Series (1906),

I, 169, 197.

⁵ *Garden Cities and Town Planning*, New Series (1908), III, 97.

sufficient income from other sources to make it possible to forego for several years any appreciable return on the investment of these reserves. This delay in obtaining any return, coupled with the modesty of the maximum return that could ever be expected, made it impossible to finance such a scheme by the ordinary processes of commercial borrowing; and, since public organization for social enterprises was quite outside prevailing ideas for most of the period, the association of new industrial villages with the expansion of existing businesses, which has already been observed in several instances, was inevitable.

The number of firms with the means to found industrial villages was, of course, much greater than the number which actually did so, but most of them had no incentive to move from the locations in which they were already established, usually in the middle of a substantial town. A new firm was not normally interested in any but an urban situation, and most nineteenth-century firms were young. New businesses were usually compelled to be economical in their use of capital and, to gain a footing in a highly competitive industry, they had to keep their overhead charges to a minimum. In a town there was no need for a manufacturer to provide anything but his own factory and machinery and the working capital necessary for his business. Public services were few in number and limited in scope and their real cost was almost certainly lower in substantial towns than in villages.¹ In any case, a large part of their cost was borne by householders and the overhead burden imposed on an industrialist by charges for public services was probably less than proportionate to his share in the imposition of costs on the community. In a small community the position of the industrialist was less favourable in that respect. And if, in order to ensure their quality, he undertook the direct provision of houses and their necessary services in a village, he incurred extra capital charges which, though they might be recouped in the long run, must for several years be borne by his ordinary business. Moreover, by settling in a town he had immediate access to a reserve pool of labour, which enabled him, with little danger of active resistance, to adjust the number of his employees and the size of his pay-roll to fluctuations in the volume of business.

Economic development in Britain in the nineteenth century depended largely on the individual activities of industrialists, and it is clear that most of the rational factors (and some irrational ones too) enabled them to contribute much more easily, though haphazardly, to the creation of large towns than to the establishment of a multiplicity of industrial villages. But the quality of their achievement was influenced by the limitations of what they were willing, as well as able, to perform. In general, an industrialist could place his business in a town or a village, and it was in his own interest to choose the town. Some industries, however, of which coal-mining was the chief, rarely permitted such a choice, and their workers had to be accommodated in comparatively small, isolated groups. The provision made for them does little credit to the social outlook of the time. A few attempts to build, in these circumstances, villages which should be healthy and comfortable living places have been mentioned, but the majority of mining communities have no place in any account of model villages.

In the later years of the nineteenth century, and immediately afterwards, the economic situation and the main lines of social policy were changing profoundly.

¹ The comparative costs of such services in large towns and villages were never thoroughly investigated. In 1910 a study of all the county boroughs suggested that the cost *per capita* of nearly all public services was lowest in towns with populations of about 90,000. See C. A. Baker 'Population and Costs in Relation to City Management', in *J. R. Statist. Soc.* (1910-11), LXXIV, 75.

There were more firms with sufficient financial strength to be able to initiate reforms on behalf of their workers. At the same time, in most industries the days of easy expansion had come to an end. Foreign competition had an effect on receipts and foreign example could no longer be treated with lofty disdain. It was possible that what Krupp had done in building model estates on the outskirts of Essen helped to make his employees more efficient workers and his firm a more dangerous competitor,¹ and anything which improved efficiency had to be seriously considered. Apart, also, from business considerations, the enormous expansion of productivity achieved by previous generations had led to a great increase in the number of people with sufficient leisure to concern themselves with the improvement of the quality of living. All this was reflected in attacks, both practical and verbal, on long-standing defects of British towns and attempts to ensure that they should not be repeated. As far as industrial villages were concerned, the general public was for the first time prepared to consider them seriously as a contribution to the possible solution of the housing problem; more firms were in a position to provide them, more firms believed it might be in their interest to provide them, more firms did provide them. But, however significant was their example, it was quite out of scale with the magnitude of the task of providing habitable homes in sufficient numbers and in towns or villages which were inimical neither to a happy and healthy life nor to the efficiency of industrial production.

To establish or transform an urban community is no individual's obligation, nor is it desirable that it should be so. A town that is too dependent on one benefactor may suffer the consequences of dependence. Saltaire, for example, lost its distinctive character after the death of its creator. Most of the institutions which he founded fell into decay before the end of the century and even his alms-houses and wash-houses were divided up and rented.² That does not take all the value from the achievement of Salt or others who followed his example. In the mid-nineteenth century social reform could only come from the activity of individual firms or small groups of private persons acting in association. It was far better that they should achieve what they could than that no effort should be made. But some problems were quite beyond their scope, and that of the creation and regulation of new towns to be homes for an expanding population and to be centres for an even more swiftly growing production was one of them. That is why the history of industrial villages is an account only of an undercurrent, though a persistent one, in nineteenth-century social and economic development. There was no means of sufficiently organizing the resources needed to make it a prominent feature. It was not that in the nineteenth century there was little dissatisfaction with the existing and increasing accumulation of industry and population in great cities. But once that situation had been established, the re-location of factories and houses, save in the most gradual way, involved costs that few were prepared to contemplate, particularly as the superiority of the anticipated result was very much a matter of hypothesis. It seemed better to retain the existing pattern and improve it as opportunity served. Consequently the local intensity of industrial settlement showed no noticeable decline before 1914. Only since then has the remote influence of the pioneers of industrial villages begun to make itself more strongly felt.

London School of Economics

¹ For an account of Krupp's housing undertakings see J. E. Budgett Meakin, 'The Evolution of Ideal Industrial Housing', in *The Garden City* (1904), 1, 41-2.

² Meakin, *Model Factories and Villages: Ideal Conditions of Labour and Housing*, pp. 416-17.

XVII. THE HISTORY OF THE POTATO¹

By K. H. CONNELL

THE potato in much of Europe has had an influence far more profound than any that can be measured merely by examining the history of crop-rotations and diet. Because it will thrive on land that before its introduction was of little or no economic importance, and because its yield per acre on land already farmed is twice or even four times as great as that of the staples it supplements or supplants, its advance creates a margin of productive land which is not required to provide either the people's customary standard of living or the rents they have traditionally paid. The produce of this margin, like other 'surplus value', is coveted by rival claimants and its eventual appropriation can do much to determine the number of people the land sustains, their class structure and the type of farming they practise.

Dr Salaman, in his *History and Social Influence of the Potato*, analyses the consequences of the creation and appropriation of this 'surplus value' in a number of communities, most of them in the British Isles. He shows that it was not always the minority that engrossed: in Tristan da Cunha, which he presents as a classless society, the absence of motive for exploitation meant that the almost exclusive use of the potato had no evil social effect; in the Channel Islands its dominance in the field did not extend to the pot and all were able to share the benefits of a new export trade; in eighteenth-century Lancashire the willing adoption by the country people of the potato brought as its reward a greater command of more expensive foods. But in Dr Salaman's interpretation it was only exceptionally that the potato's abundance did not allow the people who lived on it to be robbed of more than they gained from its calories and vitamins. 'The potato can, and generally does, play a two-fold part: that of a nutritious food, and that of a weapon ready forged for the exploitation of a weaker group in a mixed society' (p. 600).

As might be expected, Dr Salaman's largest single topic—it accounts for more than 150 pages—is the history of the potato in Ireland. He is not as sceptical, as some recent authors, of the legend that Raleigh introduced the potato in, or around, 1588, and he thinks that 'within fifty years of its introduction...[it] had become the universal and staple article of the people's food in the greater part of the island' (p. 189). On the face of it this is a bold claim: it cuts athwart all we know about the conservatism of a peasantry in its methods of farming no less than in its food habits. We are left to guess how, in spite of the remoteness of much of the country and the wretchedness of its communications, so bulky a seed as that of the potato could have been distributed over the length and breadth of the land in so short a time. Dr Salaman's convincing discussion of the causation of such a revolution in cropping and diet weakens our scepticism, but it returns when we examine the evidence on which he bases his claim. Climate and soil in much of the country were well suited to the potato: the

¹ Redcliffe N. Salaman, F.R.S., *The History and Social Influence of the Potato*, with a chapter on 'Industrial Uses' by W. G. Burton. (Cambridge University Press, 1949. Pp. xxiv+685. 50s.)

cultivation of the land in small parcels favoured a crop that needed to be worked by hand: the traditional 'paring and burning' of the land gave the potato the potash it needed and the use of soot as a fertilizer gave it nitrogen. Of more positive importance were the landlord's greed and the destruction of war and revolution. The landlord's appropriation of an unnatural proportion of what grain, livestock and its derivatives his tenants produced left them in need of a food of which no superior would rob them because it was coveted by none. The destruction and dangers of war made more insistent the quest for a foodstuff other than grain, one that could better withstand the trampling of marauders and one which they would find more difficult to destroy by fire or carry away. Reading this, we are prepared to accept the evidence that by the 1630's the potato was indeed the Irishman's staple. But here Dr Salaman disappoints us: we can search his pages in vain for convincing evidence. Nor can we agree that from the 1670's 'every writer . . . who touches on the home life of the Irish people, has much the same tale to tell: the food of the people is the potato, and milk' (p. 229).¹

Dr Salaman proceeds to a discussion of the technical methods and tenurial relationships evolved by the Irish as part of their potato economy, and to an account of the great disaster that wrecked it in 1846. Here, in particular, the economic historian must welcome the incursion into his province of a scholar who combines unrivalled experience in growing the potato in laboratory and less abnormal conditions with the training of a medical man, as well as with a distinguished career as a plant physiologist. We can no longer dismiss the Irishman's 'lazy-bed' with a sneer at the adjective. It is illuminating to learn that in pre-colonial Peru and Bolivia a dependence on the potato no less extreme than that in eighteenth-century Ireland, together with supply-conditions of land, labour and capital that were not altogether dissimilar, led to an almost identical method of growing the potato and to the evolution of tools for dealing with it very like those used in Ireland. Admittedly the lazy-bed was open to neglect—what agricultural practice is not?—but it was of great value on the badly drained ground where many potato patches were pegged out; it allowed the roots to draw sustenance from decomposing turf and to attain their full run in loosely packed soil; once planted, it safeguarded the seed from attack by frost, and, to a certain extent, from attack by man.

For the century after the Famine, Dr Salaman's story is initially one of the stubbornness with which the Irish clung to the potato in spite of the disaster of which it seemed so obviously the cause. But many developments were loosening its hold. The maize-meal introduced in the Famine lingered on as one alternative foodstuff. As in England during the French Wars, the administration of poor relief was used to accustom people to the foods enlightened people thought they should consume; but the boast in Ireland in the fifties was that no potatoes were served in any workhouse. Repeated crop-failures sharpened the moral that the potato was too treacherous a root to be the mainstay of a nation. The encroach-

¹ I have elsewhere criticized at some length Dr Salaman's views (as he expressed them in 1943) on the chronology of the Irishman's dependence on the potato. Boulter, Madden, Swift, two anonymous pamphleteers of the 1740's and even writers describing conditions nearly half a century later, support the proposition that the dissemination of the potato was a much slower process than Dr Salaman maintains. See R. N. Salaman, *The Influence of the Potato on the Course of Irish History* (Dublin, 1943), pp. 4-5; and K. H. Connell, *The Population of Ireland, 1750-1845* (Oxford, 1950), pp. 125-35. Dr Salaman, in a recent letter, tells me that he is now inclined to believe that the potato was 'well established' in Ireland by about 1680—fifty years, that is, later than the time he suggests in his book. He emphasizes, as of course was the case, that the time at which it was adopted varied from place to place.

ment, upon land that had sustained the people, of stock intended for export (and often unrequited export) tended to retain the dominance of the potato, but the influence of this factor was often undermined by the drain of emigration which allowed a new equilibrium between population and resources, one which enabled a potato diet to be more generously interspersed with costlier foods. The same process, allied with other developments, led to substantially higher wages and to the fostering (almost, for Ireland, the creation) of a class marked off from the mass of the people by its superior comfort, but not marked off by its inaccessibility to them, or their children. 'Faith in the sufficiency of a civilization, based on the potato, had seemed natural and bearable when all alike were poor, but now that conditions in the greater part of Ireland had improved, the abject nakedness of...[this] social order...was too humiliating to be endured' (p. 330). But what, more than all else, distinguished the rural economy of twentieth-century Ireland from that of the decades before the Famine was the emergence of tenurial arrangements that did not withhold from the peasants almost the whole of their produce save the potatoes. The land legislation meant that the industry and enterprise of the peasants were no longer unrewarded, and it is not strange that when the prize they coveted most eluded them, those who were obliged to remain in the country put to practical effect the lesson that was incised in their minds by the potato blight.

Dr Salaman's story of the rise of the potato economy in Ireland, its crisis and its fall, is well told. But some of his judgements in a final chapter on Ireland are open to question. He says that:

far from the potato being forced on the [Irish] people from above, it spread through the entire social organism from below. It had no sponsors. It needed none; arriving at a critical moment in the people's history it had filled the yawning gap which the wars of the sixteenth century had torn in the tenor of their lives. As soon as the potato was established, the standard of living automatically became fixed at a level commensurate with the energy its production demanded. The more the potato fulfilled the requirements of the household, the sooner was endeavour damped down and sloth and slovenliness exalted. As time went on, the sequence—poverty, potatoes; larger families, more potatoes, and greater poverty, became ever more firmly established, till nothing but revolution or catastrophe could break it (pp. 342–3).

Dr Salaman here attributes to the potato an influence greater than any it exercised. He elevates it almost to the position of constructor and source of power of the social system which, admittedly, was shattered by the failure of the potato in the 1840's but which was destined (if there be an economic destiny) by the instability bred of its injustice to eventual overthrow. If a creator and source of energy of the Irish economy are to be sought they will be found, not in a plant, but in the tenurial relationships which arrogated this plant to its position of undeserved eminence. It is hardly correct to say that in Ireland the potato had no sponsor: every landlord whose greed for rent could never be satisfied forced his tenants to seek their living from an ever-smaller proportion of their holdings and thereby he championed the prolific potato no less effectively than Parmentier or the administrators of the Speenhamland System. Nor can we agree that the potato lowered the Irishman's standard of living.¹ Of course

¹ The claim that it did so, implicit in the sentences quoted above, is made explicitly in another place: 'in Ireland', Dr Salaman says, 'the potato had reduced the art of living to that of the beast of the field' (p. 262). Elsewhere he puts the matter in a wider context: when a 'weaker group' in a community comes to adopt some food like the potato as its mainstay, 'experience shows that this course inevitably results in a lower standard of living' (p. 600).

it allowed him to be maintained with less expenditure of resources: but this is a different issue. Even apart from any amelioration of conditions that can be detected during the years between the establishment of Grattan's Parliament and the end of the French Wars, it is most improbable that the mass of the Irish were in a worse condition at the end of the eighteenth century than they had been a hundred or more years before, when the potato was ousting the traditional foodstuffs. Nor, indeed, should we expect things to be otherwise: tenurial relationships, the overriding cause of later misery, were no less oppressive a century and more earlier, when the land-owning class first indulged in the spoliation it was created to further.

Again it is to inflate the role of the potato to say simply that it damped down endeavour and exalted sloth and slovenliness. In so far as these depressing results accompanied its dissemination it was because they, like the dominance of the potato, were a result of the new landlordism: enterprise and industry, not unnaturally, were less cherished when separated from their fruits. That the potato, as Cobbett said, was a 'lazy-root' was a cause of its ready welcome in the evil economy of Ireland: this attribute of the potato allowed the peasant's subsistence to be produced with a minimal expenditure of labour in the same way as the abundance of its yield allowed it to be grown on a minimal area of land. But the point of thus economizing in labour and land was to free these factors for the greater production of the grain or butter or beef which made up the rent. And that, under such conditions, so much rent was accumulated, is one answer to the accusations of sloth; another is the amount of reclamation undertaken by the peasantry in the half-century before the Famine; yet another is the extent to which the peasants seized the opportunities of travelling in search of work afforded by the fact that the potato, in its lazy-bed, thrived untended.

Yet again, in the sentences quoted, Dr Salaman transfers to the potato responsibility for developments which more properly should be linked with it as stemming from a common cause. It is wrong to say that there was the sequence 'poverty, potatoes; larger families, more potatoes, and greater poverty'. Poverty to a degree that could not easily be aggravated was a constant: it was, we have seen, a consequence, more than anything else, of harsh landlord-tenant relationships. The potato was an aspect of the poverty and a consequence of the harshness; so, also, to simplify almost to the point of falsifying, were the larger families. Far from the potato making wretchedness more profound it would be astonishing if a people treated as harshly as the Irish and living on any other staple could have been as well nourished. It is for this excellence as a foodstuff that the potato should be fitted in the pattern of cause and effect in the Irish economy: it meant that the high fertility which accompanied early marriage was not offset by still higher mortality. The potato, in short, did less to change the nature than the size of the Irish nation.

In his discussion of Scotland in the second half of the eighteenth century Dr Salaman shows how necessary to the rapid and ruthless transformation of the social economy of the Highlands was the clansmen's swift acceptance of a potato dietary. The defeat of the Pretender at Culloden was soon followed by the conversion of the clan chieftains into landlords and by the withdrawal from their followers of their traditional rights of occupying or using the clan-lands. The proprietors, unlike the chiefs whose places they had usurped, or whose mantles they had cast, no longer measured their status by the number of their dependents. Like their class elsewhere, they equated their worth with the length of their rent rolls and they discovered that sheep were a more fruitful source of

rent than men. With the hills converted to sheep-walk the wintering of the flocks required the shelter of the valleys. The technique adopted to clear the glens of the farmers, crofters, cottars and their oat fields was not novel. Farmers' rents were doubled or quadrupled; crofters and cottars, no longer having a title that could be supported, moved off, their opposition overridden by eviction or stifled by the certainty of its failure. Some of the clansmen, driven from the glens, trekked to the lowland towns, crossed the Border, or crossed the Atlantic. Their fortunes and misfortunes are not the concern of the historian of the potato. The great majority, attracted by fishing and kelp-making, moved to the coastal districts, and, with compulsion similar to that which pressed on the Irish, fashioned for themselves an economy akin to that of the west of Ireland. The winds, the rains and the boulders of their new environment, as well as the loss of their stock, put their traditional foodstuffs beyond their reach, and, like the Irish, committed to paying exorbitant rents, they were driven to depend on the most prolific of foods. By 1775—in, that is, little more than a dozen years after its introduction—Dr Salaman believes that 'with one or two exceptions', the potato 'had spread throughout the Highlands to every crofter's and cottar's plot' (p. 364).

By comparison with the spectacular progress which Dr Salaman believes the potato achieved in Ireland, its advance in England in the seventeenth century was trivial. Indeed, when we learn that by the mid-century it was almost unknown in England except to botanists and the most enterprising of gardeners we become even more chary of accepting the proposition that twenty or thirty years earlier it had already become the staple of the mass of the Irish. In the next fifty years the potato caught the imagination of the first of its enthusiastic champions. One of them fitted it neatly into mercantilist teaching. He wanted the king to reserve to himself the right of planting the new crop, but to allow others to do so on buying licences. The population was to be encouraged to consume potatoes both as a vegetable and as a constituent of their bread, and more wheat would then be freed to add to the nation's exports. But, in spite of the enthusiasts and the more sober encouragement of the Royal Society, the English, south of the Trent at least, continued to cling to their traditional foodstuffs. In Lancashire, Dr Salaman thinks that the new food had a more ready welcome. But, once again, in his claim that the potato 'must have won a place in the dietary of the native inhabitants of Lancashire before the end of the seventeenth century' (p. 451) he seems to put a larger construction on his data than they will bear. The seventeenth-century Lancashire evidence is threefold: certain local markets were taxing the sale of potatoes; a woman bought some for seed; a rector sued a number of his parishioners for a tithe on the root. All this, admittedly, leaves no doubt that potatoes were grown in Lancashire, but we need the evidence of family dietaries before we can agree that they were grown for men rather than stock. After all, as Dr Salaman points out elsewhere, 'before the potato could play the part of fodder for the poor, it was necessary that it should prove its worth as food for swine' (p. 455).

The years of the Napoleonic wars and their aftermath were the critical time in the history of the potato in England. Potatoes and white bread competed for pride of place in the dietary of the nation: as adverse economic conditions overbore the conservatism of pride and tradition so, in town and country, potatoes edged out bread and cheese. In the first half of the eighteenth century, a period of well-being for the mass of the people was also a period when they remained attached to their traditional foodstuffs: at the end of the century falling

real wages set the stage for the advance of the potato. Those who eventually consumed it were the least willing of its champions: they showed all the traditional dislike of a new foodstuff and even more forcibly they resented being made to live like the immigrant Irish. But statesmen, clergy and landlords more than made up for any diffidence shown by the poor. They urged the attractions of the potato in their writings and addresses and, more persuasively, in the wages they paid and the scales of poor relief which they largely determined. They helped, too, when they remunerated paupers and labourers in potatoes or potato-patches.

After Cobbett's time there was much less advocacy of the potato. Nor was there the need for more: by the middle of the century 'it was familiar in every home, and essential in most' (p. 532). Thereafter, except when war again reminded people of how much more prolific was the potato than grain crops, the story is one of recession. Free trade, the lower cost of producing and transporting foreign food, and the rise of wages assured a supply of, and a demand for, foodstuffs that had more to recommend them than their cheapness and nutritive quality. The dominance of the potato lingered on more stubbornly in the countryside than in the towns, partly because, as Dr Salaman points out, there is often a wider range of cheap and attractive imported foods in the towns, and partly, doubtless, because rural wages remained below town wages, because the rural worker had readier access to the land and skill needed to grow his own potatoes and because he displayed more of the conservatism which, having resisted the potato so tenaciously in an earlier phase of its history, now allowed it to prolong its influence. But by the twentieth century even in the countryside 'the potato habit gradually weakened, and its place in the dietary of the land-workers became only little more important than that which it occupied in the households of the rich' (pp. 534-5).

Dr Salaman warns his readers that he approached his subject, of great importance in economic history, with the training neither of an economist nor of an historian. But he did so only because of the neglect of those within whose province it naturally falls. Amateur historian though he professes to be, his work never degenerates into antiquarianism, nor does he attempt to piece together the history of the potato as though the vigour of its advance in any community or the consequences to which it led were independent of the prevailing social and economic—and indeed political, religious and moral—climate. The historian cannot complain that he is not held in honour. But he will notice that, while Dr Salaman draws his information on the potato from a critical examination of the most widespread of contemporary sources, the historical background is often largely derived from secondary works and is sometimes suspect if not misleading. It is surprising to read (on p. 585) that from its inception the cotton industry was conducted in factories; that it was mechanized after the woollen and linen industries and that it was largely this mechanization of textiles that introduced Tull's improvements of the farmers' tools. It is to treat with undeserved disrespect the criticisms of a growing body of historians to say that during the French Wars from 1793 to 1815 'the majority of the industrial workers of England...were on the verge of starvation' (p. 520), and that for the next twenty years 'the food of the working classes in the Manchester districts was confined to potatoes, porridge and some bacon' (p. 521).

The secondary sources of Irish economic history are sparser than the English and partly, doubtless, for this reason, they are more in need of revision. Dr Salaman maintains with them (and, indeed, with many contemporary

writers) that the extension of the franchise in 1793 to forty-shilling freeholders was an influential cause of the subdivision of holdings (p. 275). But it is doubtful if the prospect of political power was more than an incidental attraction to the great majority of landlords to whom subdivision was simply one of a number of practices designed to add to their rents. The conclusion (p. 277) that 'nothing was done' to reclaim waste land reads oddly in conjunction with the parochial and county 'statistical accounts' of the war years, and with the statistics compiled for the Ordnance Survey and the censuses in the thirties and forties. If these are to be trusted, in most, if not all, of the years between 1793 and the Famine a rapidly growing population was pressing its potato patches farther into the bogland and higher up the hillsides. Dr Salaman inclines again to paint too black a picture when he says that 'during this period of population expansion, no advance took place in agricultural methods' (p. 279), and when he says that during the American and French Wars the 'return [*sic*] to tillage... [was] unaccompanied by any betterment of the social condition of the vast majority of the people' (p. 280). Of greater substance is his reiteration of the traditional interpretation of the agricultural history of the years between war and famine. With the end of the wars, he says, 'the demand for corn fell, a return to pasture was indicated; this meant the consolidation of holdings and the abolition of the small ones'. 'A wave of eviction, second only to that following the famine of 1846-7, set in' (p. 283). In the years after 1815 the landlords were certainly disillusioned in their hopes that a petty tilling tenantry might mend their fortunes. Many of them were anxious to 'consolidate and clear', but, by and large, it seems to be the case that they found too strong for them the opposition of a peasantry determined to provide for its sons in a period when they had few alternatives to settling on or near their family holdings. Certainly, by the Act of 1826, 'landlords could withhold the right of subletting' (p. 283), but the evidence published by the Poor Inquiry Commission ten years later shows how seldom fathers were dissuaded from subdivision, whether open or tacit, by its illegality.

Dr Salaman's history is broadly defined. There are few fields of scholarship which can throw light on the influence of the potato in pre-colonial South America and the British Isles in which he has not worked his passage. His chapter headings do not exhaust his curiosity and competence even though they range from archaeology to folk-lore and botany, from etymology to art and agricultural technique. Little of value can be said here on many of his themes—except that he is never dull and usually convincing. For all its formidable length it is a pleasure to read his book and its publishers have given it an appearance worthy of the immense care and enthusiasm that have gone into its writing. It is adorned with illustrations no less diverse than the text. Both the bibliography and the index are of impressive dimensions. Inevitably, in a work on such a scale, ranging over so many fields of knowledge, the reader's interest is whetted by the opportunity for criticism. But he will feel that in many other branches of history there is need for the labour of scholars whose credentials, like Dr Salaman's, are 'a scientific training and an abiding interest in my fellow-men'. The history of invention and that of the struggle with disease are obvious examples, and while there may be few other plants with a story so significant and so well documented as that of the potato, whenever the introduction of a crop, whether intended for food or as a raw material, has economized in land or labour there is reason for asking, as Dr Salaman has asked, 'who benefited; who suffered?'. But on reading Dr Salaman's preface we may well wonder how often in the future a work of the

scale and intensity of his may be paralleled. What scholar, at the age of thirty-two, 'physically active...happily married, free from financial cares', and seeking a seasonal diversion from the hunting which occupied his winter months, can spend nearly half a century of devoted labour on a chosen topic? One more such work, at least, we may hope, will not be long delayed: we may look forward, with Dr Salaman, to the publication of the material he has assembled on the history of the potato in other parts of the world.

Nuffield College, Oxford

REVIEWS

HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY

James Isham's Observations and Notes, 1743-1749. Edited with an introduction by E. E. RICH, assisted by Miss A. M. JOHNSON. (Published as volume XII of the Hudson's Bay Record Society, by the Champlain Society, London, 1949.)

This volume is the last of the series of Hudson's Bay Record Society publications to appear in collaboration with the Champlain Society. Henceforward the Hudson's Bay Record Society will publish independently under the general editorship of Mr E. E. Rich.

James Isham was a life-long servant of the Hudson's Bay Company who, beginning as a writer in the Company's service in 1732 in North America, came to occupy the post of Chief Factor at York Fort from 1746 until his death there in 1761. His half-breed son, Charles Isham, served the Company as an officer until his death in 1814.

As source material for the history of Canada, Isham's *Observations on Hudsons Bay, 1743* and his *Notes and Observations on a Book Entitled A Voyage to Hudsons Bay in the Dobbs Galley, 1749* were fully utilized by the late Prof. A. S. Morton in his *History of the Canadian West*, and it would have seemed after reading Morton that nothing more could be made of the Isham material. Not so. In his introduction, which is an important monograph on the history of British economic expansion in the eighteenth century, Mr Rich has made Isham's life and work the focal point of a careful and fruitful examination of a segment of the history of the Hudson's Bay Company in relation to the larger problems of overseas markets for manufactures. Isham was the principal witness, perhaps the decisive one, before the Select Committee appointed in March, 1749, 'to enquire into the State and Condition of Countries adjoining to Hudson's Bay'. The establishment of this Committee represented the high-water mark of flooding pressure by merchants and manufacturers in 'London, Yarmouth, Stockport, Wolverhampton, Shrewsbury, Leeds, Hull, Liverpool, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Carlisle, Clithero, Manchester, Halifax, Nottingham, Derby, Lancaster, Wakefield, Macclesfield, Wigan, Coventry, Ripon, Appleby, Birmingham, Whitehaven, Preston, Kendal and Bristol', to open the trade to Hudson's Bay, further to extend the market there by planting colonies, and to prosecute more vigorously the search for a north-west passage to the Pacific.

Long experience and precise knowledge of the country enabled Isham to demonstrate the impracticality of expanding markets in Hudson's Bay, of establishing colonies and of finding a usable passage westward north of the American continent. He agreed with the opponents of the Company that French competition must be countered by establishing inland trading posts, but he shrewdly pointed out that inland transport costs were a limiting factor in the Hudson's Bay trade.

Isham's *Notes* were produced in the heat of the struggle to keep the Hudson's Bay trade closed to the Company, and they are thus related to the larger general problems of economic development. His *Observations*, however, are not of direct

interest except in so far as an original account of the strange and remote is always interesting. They consist of a vocabulary of the Cree language, which Mr Rich says is useless except as an indication of what Indians and traders talked about; an account of Indian modes of living (he records the recipe for a fricassé of head lice); and finally a very extensive and careful account of the fauna of the pre-Cambrian area, illustrated in several instances tolerably well.

To all students of British expansion overseas Mr Rich's introductory essay, together with his biographical accounts of Isham and his principal antagonists (except Dobbs, whose biography could have been usefully added in this volume), will be an illuminating and valuable work. The greater is the pity, therefore, that it is available only in a volume of limited circulation.

H. S. FERNS

The University, Birmingham

FARMING BOOKS IN THE 18TH CENTURY

G. E. FUSSELL. *More Old English Farming Books from Tull to the Board of Agriculture*. (Crosby Lockwood, London, 1950, pp. vii+186. 15s.)

In 1947 Mr Fussell published *The Old English Farming Books 1523-1730*, a critical bibliography of the subject from Fitzherbert onwards, and a contribution in itself—through his valuable comments and narrative—to English agricultural history. He has now carried his work on from Jethro Tull to the foundation of the Board of Agriculture, from 1731 to 1793. These two generations saw remarkable advances in farming practice, and a correspondingly large increase in the flow of books on farming and kindred subjects. Mr Fussell divides his period into three parts: the age of Tull and Ellis, up to 1750: the seventeen years of what he calls the Minor Prophets, 1750-67: and then the great age of Arthur Young and William Marshall, beginning with Young's first book, published in 1767.

Mr Fussell's detailed and critical account of the careers and writings of Young and Marshall is most valuable to have by one. Further, though Young lived on until 1820 and published his last article in 1819, well beyond the author's closing date for this volume, we are provided in an appendix with a complete bibliography of Young's writings over more than fifty years, compiled by Mr G. D. Amery of the School of Rural Economy at Oxford. Separate indexes to all the titles quoted in the book, and to all the authors, add to its value as a work of reference. The book is illustrated with eight title-pages, portraits, and contemporary implements, excellently reproduced. Mr Fussell is to be commended on producing an altogether competent work of reference, not only to the books but to their authors also. I have only noticed one slip in the volume: on pages 74 and 171 the *Annals of Agriculture* are said to begin in 1783, but on page 85 the date given is 1784.

The two volumes so far produced by Mr Fussell are so useful and well done that one hopes his publishers will feel encouraged to publish the third volume which he has in mind for the period between 1793 and 1840. One would welcome his guidance through the jungle of the Board of Agriculture's reports especially, not to mention the unchecked flow from hundreds of private authors. I may perhaps be allowed to add a personal note about Arthur Young which throws some light on his character as a man. In the vestry of Bradfield Combust church, in the heart of Suffolk, is a tablet placed there by Young to the memory of his

wife who died in 1815. After giving the bare dates of her birth and death, he goes on to say: 'She was the great grand-daughter of John Allen, esquire, of Lyng House in the county of Norfolk, the first person, according to the Count de Boulainvilliers, who there used marl.' And there her epitaph ends. Young's own grave in the churchyard is neglected, nearly buried in the long grass.

W. G. HOSKINS

University College, Leicester

RIVER NAVIGATION

LOUIS C. HUNTER assisted by BEATRICE JONES HUNTER. *Steamboats on the Western Rivers. An Economic and Technological History.* (Harvard University Press (London: Geoffrey Cumberlege). 1949. Pp. xiii + 684. 80s.)

This book, admirably illustrated in a pictorial way, lacks the one thing which could make it fully intelligible to the English reader—clear maps of the Ohio and Mississippi. It is a work of scholarship which obviously has been a labour of love. One feels that everything knowable on the subject is known to the author and is set out in orderly fashion, with attractive footnotes which strengthen and illumine the text. Part I. The Steamboat as an Economic Instrument—Introduction (c. 1815)—Structural and Mechanical Evolution—River Improvements—Techniques of Operation—Accidents (as a reader of Mrs Trollope I began the book by consulting 'snag' in the index, and was promptly referred to a whole chapter of them: I next consulted 'Twain, Mark', hoping for a whole chapter of him, but here the fare was less ample). Part II. The Steamboat as a Business Institution—Organisation—Ledgers—Cabin and Deck Accommodation—Labour. Part III. Peak and Decline—The Critical Decade pre-Civil War—Regulation—Triumph of the Railroads—Years of Adjustment. All this, with Appendix and Index, requires and deserves its 684 large pages. At its price it can only be for us a Library Book, but it ought to be on the shelf of every good academic library. A regional study which is also a period piece (say 1815–75) invites comparison; and we in England would welcome now a Study of Riverine Economy in North America based on the comparative performance of the Mississippi, the Hudson and the St Lawrence, the Mississippi with its tributaries, the Hudson with its Erie Canal, the St Lawrence with its Great Lakes. It would then be for us to take up the challenge and reply with Nile, Indus and Irrawaddy, while Continental scholars would complete the programme with Rhine, Rhone and Volga. In this way, out of regional study on a mondial scale, economic historians might reach principles of definite service to economic theory.

C. R. FAY

Cambridge

CUSTOMS UNION

JACOB VINER. *The Customs Union Issue.* (Stevens and Sons, Ltd. for the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1950. Pp. viii + 211. 20s.)

Since countries receiving Marshall Aid pledged themselves to abolish abnormal restrictions on their mutual trade, there has been much discussion on the possibility of establishing customs unions in Western Europe which might eventually be merged into an economic federation of the whole region.

When economists examine the difficulties to be overcome in forming customs unions, and when they speculate upon the consequences likely to follow the abolition of tariff barriers, they sometimes convey the impression that they are exploring a virgin field of study. Dr Viner takes a different point of view. He appreciates that European countries have been discussing plans for customs unions for some three hundred years—as early as 1665 there was a project for an economic union of Austria, Spain and Bavaria—and that since the founding of the German Zollverein in 1834 several customs unions have been successfully launched. He recognizes that a study of the history of such unions may throw useful light on problems that some of his colleagues are discussing as an academic exercise in pure economics. Dr Viner's book is based upon a careful examination not only of the extensive literature on the subject, but also of a collection of over two hundred and fifty documents on the history of customs unions that has recently been assembled in the United States by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. The bibliography of seventy pages which lists this material is not the least valuable part of Dr Viner's book.

Various difficulties have to be faced when attempting to use the experience of the past to assist in the solution of modern problems concerning customs unions. Discretion has to be exercised in deciding what historical evidence is of value and what is not. An examination of the results of uniting small territories such as Monaco, Lichtenstein or San Marino—or even Luxemburg or the Saar—with larger neighbours will hardly yield information of much significance. Nor is the economic unification of colonial territories—such as Nigeria and the British Cameroons—in any way analogous to possible future customs unions in Western Europe. It was, as Dr Viner points out, the German Zollverein of 1834–70 that 'was the pioneer and by far the most important customs union, and generalizations about the origin, nature and consequences of unifications of tariffs tend to be based mainly or wholly on the German experience'. During the establishment and expansion of this customs union many obstacles had to be overcome which bear some resemblance to present-day problems. The history of the Zollverein shows that—given a certain tolerance and spirit of compromise on the part of those responsible for the initial negotiations and the subsequent administration—it is possible to unite territories which vary considerably in area and population and which have very different types of economy. The officials of the Zollverein made a cumbersome administrative machine work and they even overcame to a great extent the difficulty of the 'veto'—the right of a single member of the union to prevent the passing of a proposal accepted by other Governments at a Zollverein conference. Evidence from the development of an institution which lasted for thirty-six years and survived the storms of the revolutions of 1848 and the Seven Weeks War is, of course, much more valuable than conclusions drawn from mere projects for customs unions—and there were many of them—which were never tested by being put into actual operation. Dr Viner observes, however, that the experience of the Zollverein is now out of date in some respects. Quotas and exchange restrictions, as well as the policy of cartels, are now more potent weapons than customs duties in restricting international trade. A modern customs union has not only to abolish tariff walls, but it has also to set aside these restrictions if it is to succeed. On the other hand, transit dues of various kinds, which once formed a barrier to international commerce, are to-day of much less significance than they were a hundred years ago. Students will find Dr Viner's discussion of these problems of the greatest interest. The claim made in the foreword that the book is 'a challenging contri-

bution to the discussion of this timely subject' is fully justified. There is one curious sentence on page 13 to which attention must be drawn. This mentions a treaty of 1839 which is said to have brought 'Holstein-Lübeck' into the Zollverein. What happened in 1839 may be seen from the heading of a treaty between Denmark and Oldenburg to which reference is made on page 146. The Oldenburg principality of Lübeck (not to be confused with the Baltic port of the same name) at that time adopted a uniform system of customs with the Duchy of Holstein. It was not until 1867 that Holstein joined the German Zollverein.

W. O. HENDERSON

University of Manchester

SHORT REVIEWS AND NOTICES

CLEMENT G. MOTTEN. *Mexican Silver and the Enlightenment*. (Pennsylvania University Press (London: Geoffrey Cumberlege). 1950. pp. vii + 90, 16s.) Dr Motten has written a fascinating and most instructive essay. His theme is the development of the Real Sociedad Bascongada as a centre for enlightened studies in eighteenth-century Spain, and the mission of the brilliant brothers Elhuyar and their team of experts to bring this encyclopaedic European science to the aid of the mining industry of Mexico. Particularly valuable and interesting are the sections on the laws and technique of the Mexican mines, and the emphasis on the culture already achieved in Mexico is most appropriate. The description of the old 'Patio' process of extraction of silver is first-class—as was the process. The European mission failed to score any technical successes, and the old rule-of-thumb methods proved the wisdom of the old adage that 'A pitman knows more than the professors of mining'. But despite their immediate technical failure the Europeans brought an attention to geology which was to prove of great value, and they brought a care for technical education which fully justified them. It was the development of the Mexican College of Mines which put the European teaching into a form which was acceptable to Mexico, and it was a mixture of the enthusiasm and the doctrines which emanated from the College which brought Mexican silver to its peak output in 1805. The story is clear, interesting and admirably brief. The notes, grouped at the end of the essay, show a most attractive mixture of academic and practical learning.

E. E. RICH

St Catharine's College, Cambridge

LAING GRAY COWAN. *France and the Saar 1680-1948*. (New York: Columbia University Press (London: Geoffrey Cumberlege). 1950. pp 247, 22s. 6d.) Dr Laing Gray Cowan gives a clear and dispassionate account of the more recent history of the Saar, in which the French and German claims and successes or failures in governing the territory are fairly weighed. Three-fifths of the book is concerned with the history of the last thirty years, and the reading of these pages is a vivid reminder of what M. Daniel Halévy has called the acceleration of history and of the inadequacy of economic interests alone to determine political allegiance. The economic advantages of continuing under the rule of the League of Nations went for nothing at the time of the plebiscite of 1935 and there was nothing in the history of the preceding century to suggest that a free vote for any sort of union with France could occur in any foreseeable future. Yet within fifteen years such a vote was given, not because of the economic advantages alone, overwhelming though these were, but because they coincided with the political and moral debacle of that Reich which in 1935 had seemed so powerful and self-confident. Dr Cowan is therefore wise in warning his readers that German nationalism in the Saar is not necessarily extinct. He sees the best insurance against its revival in 'a Western European Union which removed the rivalry between France and a revived Germany' and hopes that in the end the Saar may become a bridge 'between these two ancient rivals'. The main defect of Dr Cowan's book is that there is not a single map. The volume opens with a geographical description. Accounts of changes of frontier, of the development of new industries, of the growing economic and strategic importance of the Saar region follow, but the reader who cries for visual aid is given none. Some other points also call for comment. We are told

(p. 23) that the French religious persecution after 1680 created a bitterness which was still evident a century later, but we are not told how many Protestants there were in the Saar at that time or in what parts of the region they were concentrated. The quotation from M. Sagnac on p. 35 to the effect that the people long remembered Hoche, 'their benefactor', 'who had dreamed of a brilliant destiny for them', seems open to question, since Hoche cannot have been in the Saar for more than eight months at most. The course of events relating to France's annexation of the Saar at the end of the eighteenth century is not quite clear, since on p. 30 the Convention in 1793 is said to have decreed the union with France of the territory already in military occupation, while on p. 36 the French Commissioners in 1797 are described as trying to secure a vote in favour of annexation; and on p. 40 in 1801 a law is said to have been passed making the Rhine Departments an integral part of France, while on p. 52 their 'formal assimilation' is spoken of as happening in 1802. On p. 50 Dr Cowan mentions the French feeling 'that Prussia sought the Saar in a deliberate attempt to aim a blow at the economic heart of France', but he does not tell us whether there is any evidence that this was a deliberate Prussian aim in 1815; and in his discussion of Napoleon III's foreign policy as a whole he seems to me to oversimplify and also to exaggerate the danger to Napoleon's throne from failure to obtain territorial compensations. On p. 100 he refers incidentally to 'a period of German immigration'. This is a point on which some statistical details would have been of great interest. What did this immigration amount to in the years 1815-1918? In the same way on p. 177 figures would have been welcome for the number of political dissidents who emigrated after the 1935 plebiscite. Finally it may be said that the Saar question has been treated too much in isolation. How far were there analogous problems in Alsace and Lorraine and how far did events elsewhere on the Rhine borderland have repercussions in the Saar? These are questions which the reader may legitimately ask, but on which, except in so far as concerns the interdependence of the ores and industries of the Saar and Lorraine, he receives little answer. They are, however, subsidiary to the main theme, and the asking of them does not detract from the value of Dr Cowan's book as a summary of French and German counter claims and as a convenient work of reference for anyone who is interested in the recent history of this much debated land.

J. P. T. BURY

Corpus Christi College, Cambridge

J. ROGGE. *Het Handelshuis Van Eeghen*. (Privately printed, Amsterdam, 1949. pp. 422.) In 1940, when business in Amsterdam was almost at a standstill, Mr Rogge took the opportunity to study his firm's archives. The result is an important addition to the published histories of particular international trading houses.

If the book, which was originally intended for private circulation, had been mainly addressed to economic historians, it would no doubt have been shorter. It contains much of interest, from the detailed description of an early typewriter to a discussion of the effect of Romanticism on bills of exchange; but the reader who wishes to sift this miscellaneous information can do so only by reading the whole book, since the chapter headings give little information about the contents, and the index is useful only to Amsterdam genealogists. He will be rewarded by a growing interest in the fortunes of the Van Eeghen family, cautious Mennonites who refused in the 1850's to supply gin to California, although their scruples did not preclude such exports to more normal markets. From small dealings in linen, the firm grew to moderate prosperity in the second half of the seventeenth century by specializing on its West-Indian connexions. It handled all the commodities usual in such trade. Its activities were typical of Amsterdam at that time, and the first hundred pages of the book merely give new examples to

confirm familiar generalizations. The author emphasizes this by summarizing at some length the conclusions of certain professional historians as a background to his narrative. The firm has been remarkable chiefly for its successful adaptation to changed conditions. It took a leading part in the development of those commercial and financial relations with the United States which consoled enterprising Amsterdam merchants for the decay of many of their traditional trades after the Fourth English War of 1780-4. This American business, apart from a period of stagnation from 1810 to 1825, employed the firm's capital, profitably on balance, until the mid-nineteenth century. The most ambitious venture was in land speculation in the early 1790's. At first it brought profit and prestige, but in 1793 Dutch investors lost confidence and the firm was left with a considerable sum tied up in undeveloped acres. The Van Eeghens patiently accepted the responsibilities of trans-atlantic landownership and were rewarded when, after forty years, the investment began to yield a return. In the second half of the nineteenth century, when Amsterdam was plainly losing its long struggle with Bremen and Hamburg for the American tobacco trade and Java rice was displacing American in the Dutch market, the firm again changed in character by taking advantage of the new opportunities for private trade in Indonesia which accompanied the triumph of Dutch liberalism after 1848. Piece goods were exported in return for all kinds of colonial produce. The firm was always examining the possibilities of new crops and was ready to assist in financing plantations when necessary. On the other hand, it took pride in remaining loyal as long as possible to the traditional institutions and procedures of Amsterdam trade. Only reluctantly did it adopt the modern methods appropriate to standardized commodities. Typically, it started an old-fashioned shipping business in the last period of sail and was among the last in Holland to abandon it.

The book ends with a brief but vivid description of life in the Amsterdam office before 1914.

H. R. C. WRIGHT

University College, Leicester

ROBERT SCHNERB. *Rouher et le Second Empire*. (Armand Collin, Paris, 1949, 750 frs.) In recent years considerable advances have been made in elucidating economic and social developments in France at the time of Napoleon III. Dunham's account of the Cobden-Chevalier treaty, Laronze's study of Baron Haussmann's activities and Duveau's impressive survey of the condition of the workers during the Second Empire may serve as examples. Now students are indebted to Dr Schnerb for a learned biography of Eugène Rouher which is based, not only on much scattered published material, but also on the important Cérçay papers (seized by the Germans in 1870 and not returned until 1919) and the Rouher-Baroche correspondence (already used by Maurain in his life of Baroche). The three colleagues, Eugène Rouher, Alphonse Baroche and Achille Fould, were supporters of the Second Empire of a very different type from the adventurers who had shared the exile of Louis Napoleon. They represented the support which Napoleon III secured from the middle classes who desired a stable régime and economic progress. A Riom lawyer, Rouher, entered politics in 1848 and shortly afterwards, at the age of 34, became Minister of Justice. After Louis Napoleon's coup d'état he was largely responsible for drawing up the new Constitution. Two of its provisions were of significance to Rouher in his subsequent career. The Emperor secured the power to authorize public works by decree and also to sign commercial treaties on his own initiative. When—after serving for a time as vice-president of the Council—Rouher became Minister of Commerce, Agriculture and Public Works, these powers were used to bring about many important economic and social reforms by Imperial decree. The well-known railway conventions of 1859, the Anglo-French commercial treaty of

1860, and numerous public works in Paris and the great provincial cities all owed much to Rouher's initiative, eloquence and capacity for hard work. France's future industrial progress was in no small measure due to Rouher's labours between 1855 and 1863. Rouher's later career is of less interest to the economic historian. He became Minister of State in 1863 and for four years zealously defended the Imperial régime against the attacks of Thiers and others in the legislature. He returned to public life under the Third Republic, and it is significant that his last public appearance in 1880 was to defend the Free Trade principles of the Cobden-Chevalier treaty against the attacks of the Protectionists. Dr Schnerb's book will be invaluable to all students of economic and social affairs during the Second Empire.

W. O. HENDERSON

University of Manchester

ALAN F. HATTERSLEY. *The British Settlement in Natal. A Study in Imperial Migration.* (Cambridge University Press. 1950. pp. vii+350, 18s.) This book, which is firmly grounded both upon South African and British records, examines the beginnings of settlement in Natal and then describes how the considerable British migration of 1849-51 filled the gap created by the renewed retreat of Boer trekkers from British rule. Private speculators, working with a limited official endorsement, organized the migration on the unrealistic basis of 20-acre plots per migrant: 200 acres would have hardly sufficed. Bad times in England stimulated the migration, which was not, however, predominantly of the poorer classes. Prof. Hattersley does not employ statistical methods, but by sketching the origins and fortunes of many individuals, he gives us a clear picture of this new British society overseas. His three concluding chapters examine the economic, political and social progress of Natal before responsible government. His book is a substantial contribution both to South African history and to migration studies.

W. K. HANCOCK

Institute of Commonwealth Studies

THE ECONOMIC HISTORY SOCIETY

PUBLICATIONS OF THE SOCIETY

REPRINTS OF ECONOMIC HISTORY CLASSICS

- No. 1. *England's Treasure by Foreign Trade*. By Thomas Mun. Price 3s.
Published by Messrs B. H. Blackwell, Broad Street, Oxford.
Full members of the Economic History Society may each obtain one copy for 1s. 6d. through the Hon. Secretary of the Society.

BIBLIOGRAPHIES AND PAMPHLETS

- No. 1. *The Industrial Revolution, 1750-1850*, a Select Bibliography. By Eileen Power.
Published by the Economic History Society.
Out of Print.
- No. 2. *Air Photography and the Evolution of the Cornfield*. By E. Cecil Curwen.
Second Edition.
Price 1s. to non-members, 6d. to members.
- No. 3. *The Industrial Revolution*. A Study in Bibliography. By T. S. Ashton.
Price 1s. to non-members, 6d. to members.
- No. 4. *Economic and Social History*. A Book List for Schools. By A. F. W. Pratt.
Price 1s. 6d. to non-members, 1s. to members.

Members of the Economic History Society may obtain at reduced rates by applying through the Hon. Secretary:

Adam Smith as Student and Professor. By W. R. Scott.

Published by Jackson, Son and Co. Ltd., Glasgow, 1937. Price £1. 10s.; to members of the Society, £1.

OFFICERS OF THE SOCIETY

President: PROFESSOR R. H. TAWNEY

Vice-Presidents:

SIR HENRY CLAY
PROFESSOR N. S. B. GRAS

PRESIDENT EINAUDI
PROFESSOR ELI HECKSCHER

Hon. Secretary: MR E. E. RICH

Hon. Treasurer: MR F. R. SALTER

Council:

PROFESSOR T. S. ASHTON	PROFESSOR W. K. HANCOCK	DR J. F. NICHOLS
MR H. S. BENNETT	MR. R. F. HARROD	PROFESSOR M. M. POSTAN
MISS E. M. CARUS-WILSON	PROFESSOR H. HEATON	PROFESSOR A. REDFORD
DR J. D. CHAMBERS	DR W. G. HOSKINS	SIR FREDERICK REES
PROFESSOR W. H. B. COURT	PROFESSOR F. E. HYDE	PROFESSOR E. A. G. ROBINSON
MR F. J. FISHER	DR M. G. JONES	PROFESSOR SIR F. M. STENTON
PROFESSOR H. J. HABAKKUK	PROFESSOR A. V. JUDGES	MR L. STONE
PROFESSOR H. HAMILTON	MR R. V. LENNARD	

All persons interested in the study and teaching of economic history shall be eligible for membership. The annual subscription shall be 15s., or a life subscription of £9, and payment of this subscription shall entitle a member to receive, post free, one copy of each issue of the *Economic History Review*.

